

dissent

Summer 1972

\$1.50

**From Caudillo to
Jefe Maximo**

Henry Pachter

**When to Leave
the Country**

Richard Lourie

**Blood
Orange**

**Violence in
the Movies**

David Bromwich

**The Face of
the Future?**

**Possessing, Owning,
Belonging**

Erazim Kohák

**Roots of the Socialist
Dilemma**

Robert Heilbroner

**The Pluralist
Antilevelers of
Prague**

Ernest Gellner

**On Justice
under Socialism**

Edward & Onora Nell

War, Morality & Error

Andrew Greeley

NEW FROM YALE

Afternoon on the Potomac?

**A British View of America's Changing Position in the World
by Roy Jenkins**

"Sage avuncular advice from one declining world power to another. Jenkins admonishes the U.S. to learn from Mother England the art of renouncing hegemony for the modest role of *primus inter pares*."—*The Kirkus Reviews*. Anyone concerned about America's behavior in the lengthening years of Vietnam and the decline of the dollar will find much to ponder in these perceptive and timely observations by one of the keenest minds in British public life. In three crisp lectures delivered at Yale at the end of 1971 Roy Jenkins traces America's rise to indisputable leadership among the great powers in the years 1917 to 1963, interprets Britain's changing perspectives since the end of World War II, and reflects on the problems now faced by the United States as it adjusts to the world as first among equals.

Hardbound \$3.95



Yale University Press New Haven and London

in Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press

DISSENT, issued July 1, 1972, is published quarterly, spring, summer, fall, and winter, by DISSENT Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: \$6.00 for one year; \$10.00 for two years; \$4.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add \$1.00 for mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, \$1.50. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 155 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

© 1972, by DISSENT Publishing Corporation. Permission to reprint any article must be obtained from the publishers. • Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. • Second-class postage paid at New York, N. Y. • Volume XIX, Number 3 (whole No. 88).



DISSENT is a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.



SUMMER 1972

EDITOR: Irving Howe

MANAGING EDITOR:

Edith Tarcov

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Jervis Anderson, Joseph Buttinger,
Lewis Coser, Joseph Clark,
Emanuel Gellman, Carl Gershman,
Michael Harrington, Murray Hausknecht,
Tom Kahn, Erazim V. Kohák,
Jeremy Larner, Norman Mailer,
Henry Pachter, Martin Peretz,
Stanley Plastrik, Jack Rader,
Bernard Rosenberg, Bayard Rustin,
Meyer Schapiro, Brendan Sexton,
Patricia Cayo Sexton, David Spitz,
Michael Walzer, Dennis H. Wrong

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Lionel Abel, Stanley Diamond,
Theodore Draper, Erich Fromm,
Paul Goodman, Robert Heilbroner,
Robert Lekachman, Frank Marquart,
Harold Rosenberg, Stephan Thernstrom

ART DIRECTION:

Burton Wenk

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

- 451 THE MCGOVERN PHENOMENON
by Irving Howe

ARTICLES

- 453 POSSESSING, OWNING, BELONGING
by Erazim V. Kohák
- 463 ROOTS OF THE SOCIALIST DILEMMA
by Robert L. Heilbroner
- 471 THE PLURALIST ANTILEVELERS OF
PRAGUE *by Ernest Gellner*
- 483 ON JUSTICE UNDER SOCIALISM
by Edward and Onora Nell
- 492 ON ARABS AND JEWS: CHIMERA OF A BI-
NATIONAL STATE *by Michael Walzer*
- 500 IS HYPOCRISY WHAT'S WRONG?
by Stephen Miller
- 507 WHEN TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY: A STUDY OF
GEORGE GROSZ *by Richard Lourie*

NOTEBOOK

- 517 HERESIES IN EUROPEAN COMMUNISM
by Bogdan Denitch
- 520 WAR, MORALITY & ERROR
by Andrew M. Greeley
- 524 IN THE MAGAZINES
by David Bensman

MOVIES

- 525 BLOOD ORANGE, VIOLENCE IN THE
MOVIES *by David Bromwich*

BOOKS

- 530 REVIEWS *by Henry Pachter,
Terry M. Perlin, Joseph Clark*

- 542 LETTERS

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

DAVID BROMWICH, an undergraduate at Yale University, is a frequent contributor to *DISSENT*. His article "Walden Is Alive Again" appeared in our Spring 1972 issue.

BOGDAN DENITCH, a senior staff associate at the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University, is conducting a long-range comparative study on elites in Eastern and Western Europe.

ERNEST GELLNER teaches at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the author of *Thought and Change* (1965) and of *Words and Things* (1968).

ANDREW M. GREELEY, who contributed an article on "New Ethnicity & Blue Collars" to our Winter 1972 issue, is director of the Center for the Study of American Pluralism at the National Opinion Research Center and a lecturer at the University of Chicago. Among his books are *Why Can't They Be Like Us?* (1971), and

A Most Distressful Nation: The Taming of the American Irish (1972).

RICHARD LOURIE, a writer and translator, lives in Santa Cruz, California. In 1971 he won the Joseph Henry Jackson Award for his novel in progress, *Sagittarius in Warsaw*.

STEPHEN MILLER teaches English at Beaver College. His articles and poems have appeared in a number of publications.

EDWARD J. NELL teaches economic theory at the graduate faculty of the New School for Social Research. He is completing a book on the theory of income distribution, to be published by Cambridge University Press, and collaborating, with Martin Hollis, on a work on philosophy and economics.

ONORA O. NELL, who was born in Ireland, is teaching social philosophy and ethics at Barnard College. Her articles have appeared in various journals.

TERRY M. PERLIN teaches history at Williams College. He specializes in modern European intellectual history.

CHERNYSHEVSKII

The Man and the Journalist

WILLIAM F.
WOEHLIN

Chernyshevskii (1828-1889), a pivotal figure in the protest movement that followed the Crimean War, was esteemed by both Marx and Lenin. Alienated from Russia's traditional values, he also rejected the economic and political doctrines of more advanced nations. This is the first full-length biography of him in English, with particular emphasis on his intellectual views. *Russian Research Center Studies*, 67. \$12.50

In Canada/Saunders of Toronto, Ltd.

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Irving Howe

The McGovern Phenomenon

JUNE 8, 1972

Now that Senator McGovern has won the California and New Jersey primaries, only some unpredictable surprise or some very predictable skullduggery can keep him from getting the Democratic nomination. By the standards of American politics as it exists in reality—by such standards as hard work, competent organization, the articulation of program, and a certain moral seriousness—McGovern deserves the nomination. Certainly, more so than any visible competitor!

Whatever may happen in the immediate future, one thing is clear: *the McGovern phenomenon has already had a major impact on American politics.* For what he has succeeded in doing is to bring together, more through doggedness than brilliance, that loose range of political energies which combines a desire for social reform, a vague but strongly felt populism, a wish for a more moderate or modest foreign policy, and a sense that the United States is in trouble to an extent requiring extraordinary measures. I put the matter in these dry terms intentionally, since the kind of presidential campaign McGovern might undertake or the kind of presidency he might create is by no means clear as yet. But what matters is that there is movement, hope, change, energy: the scene does not appear as dead as it did a year or two ago.

Mostly middle-class in composition, drawing heavily upon students, linking elements from the old liberal constituency with those vaguely called "the New Politics," the McGovern movement has proven itself to be a serious force. Housewives and college kids, it now seems, can organize political campaigns at

least as well as party professionals and union officials; and despite all the innuendos that have been spread about frivolity and lack of persistence, these "amateurs" can be as tough, enduring, and committed as anyone else in politics.

This is a fact, and it is a major fact. Given the growth of the educated segment of the middle class, the leisure and affluence it enjoys, its capacity for developing concern (sometimes profoundly, sometimes faddishly) with issues beyond immediate interest, there is every reason to believe these new political activists will count heavily in the coming years.

The McGovern campaign in the primaries seems also to have picked up a certain amount of support from constituencies that were supposed to be locked into the palms of the trade unions and the black political leaders. California and New Jersey—but especially New Jersey—are states with significant trade union, black, and Jewish electorates. All these were supposedly Humphrey turf, by piety and tradition, debt and habit. No doubt, they remain the largest sources of electoral support for candidates like Humphrey, but it seems almost impossible that McGovern could have won in these two states as handily as he did if he had not begun to make inroads into these crucial segments of the electorate.

Young workers may be more responsive, in many instances, to generational appeals and cries for social change than they are to the political prodding of union leaders for whom they feel no special affection. Blacks and Jews, though still largely devoted to the old liberal-labor coalition, show increasing signs of in-

ternal political differentiation, especially among their younger elements. The crack-up of the liberal-labor-ethnic coalition, which for several decades was a central support of whatever social progress we have had, proceeds with seeming inexorability. And, it must be said, the behavior of the official trade union leadership, as well as its candidate, Hubert Humphrey, does little to prevent that crack-up.

Could anything be shabbier than Humphrey's television campaigning? A man in panic who was ready to say almost anything in order to get votes, Humphrey resorted to coarse reactionary appeals: If the defense budget were cut to \$55 billion, as McGovern proposed, the country would be reduced to "a second-rate power" (one might have thought that the Vietnam policies of Johnson-Humphrey and then Nixon had already gone a good way toward doing that). If McGovern's proposals for reconverting war industry to civilian uses were put into effect, California workers would lose their jobs (did this mean that Humphrey proposed to maintain the present defense budget indefinitely?). If McGovern's welfare proposals were enacted, taxes would go up unbearably (whereas a serious man might have pointed out the weaknesses in those jerry-built proposals while endorsing their general thrust).

Now, as we enter the presidential campaign, the crucial question is whether a McGovern candidacy will be able to broaden its social support while maintaining its politics of reform. Writing in March 1972, before it was clear that McGovern would sweep the primaries, and therefore putting the matter a bit more sharply than he might now, the Left Catholic journalist Michael Novak said:

So far McGovern is chiefly a spokesman of the national liberal culture. He voices the views of the educated class, highly mobile, traveled, its members more in touch (by journals, books, films) with each other than with local culture. . . . There is too much moral superiority, arousing of guilt feelings, preaching. There is not enough feeling for and with people. At least so far.

The white lower middle class, particularly in urban areas, is the key to the politics of the future. Whatever hopes we have of fundamental economic change depend upon the insight, anger, and power of that class. The enlightened are bigoted regarding the unenlightened: that is our major strategic problem. The enlightened

mean well, they are capable of change, but they have a longstanding contempt for parochial, rough, direct, ordinary people.

The key to a campaign that . . . leads the nation forward is that the national liberal culture identify with the pain and necessities of those toward whom it is now bigoted: the white lower middle class.

[—*Commonweal*, March 24, 1972]

Well-said; though by now, a few months later, there are already signs that the McGovern people, or some of them, have understood the urgency of what Novak says here. Otherwise, the nasty predictions that McGovern will prove to be the "Goldwater of the Left" might yet come true.

But if some hard thinking is needed on the part of the McGovern people—and surely they see the folly of running their campaign along lines that John Mitchell and Jerry Rubin would equally approve—then some equally severe reconsideration is required by the trade union leaders. Isn't it time they stopped deluding themselves with notions that such phenomena as the McGovern movement are "just a bunch of kids," or "a flash in the pan"? True, the unionists are much better at getting out the vote in the election itself than in the primaries; but since the primaries play so important a role in the American political system, they had better consider the implications of their weakness in the primaries. Bigger and bigger chunks of the working-class vote, for reasons both good and bad, split off from the old-line liberal Democrats. In Michigan, alarmingly, demagoguery on bussing and other issues led to a victory in the primaries for Wallace—Michigan, stronghold of trade unionism, home of the UAW, which so long has claimed a powerful machine within the Democratic party! (No doubt, this trend may be reversed in the election itself, but it remains a disgrace and worse than a disgrace, an ominous sign for the future.) In other states, an as-yet-undetermined minority of the working-class vote went to McGovern, while a good many trade unionists simply did not bother to vote in the primaries. Apparently there was lack of enthusiasm for such shopworn goods as Scoop Jackson and Hubert Humphrey.

What will the trade union leadership do

(continued on page 541)

Erazim V. Kohák

Possessing, Owning, Belonging

The future of socialism, I am convinced, depends more on its ability to provide a new conception of ownership than on its ability to redistribute property or secure social benefits. Those traditional aims retain importance even in a technologically mature society, but now have less power to inspire than they did in the past. For once ownership is coupled with the awesome ability to bring large-scale, irreversible changes in our physical and social environment, the question, Who shall own the world? becomes distinctly secondary to the question, What shall it mean to own? The urgent task today is the humanization of ownership.

I like to believe that this indeed was the concern of the pioneers of socialism, and there is some evidence to that effect. But, as a matter of historical fact, socialist movements have seldom risen above a Robin Hood model of socialism, concerned more with the distribution of property than with its definition. With a few exceptions, socialists, like capitalists, have conceived of ownership as a formal relation, independent of practice: regardless of who tills the soil or uses the tools, the “owner” is the person named in a deed or is the state agency specified by law. Both these “owners” conceive of the essence of that relation as the “right” to derive benefits from the object owned, whether in the form of rent or dividend, or of appropriation of profit by the state, with the corollary “right” to determine how the object shall be used, and in both cases without reference to the persons who actually till the soil or use the tool. In collectivist and capitalist countries alike, the definition of ownership given by the Aus-

trian civil code of 1811,¹ as the right to use, abuse or ignore, destroy, transfer or abandon, remains uncomfortably accurate: ownership continues to be conceived of as the “right,” formally defined and independent of practice, to dominate and exploit.

Certainly the Leninist conception focuses on the question, Who shall own the world? As in politics so in economics, the dominant concern of Leninism has been not with the nature of power but with its possession. The Leninist prescription, summed up in the slogan, All Power to the Soviets! has been the transfer of power into the “right hands” rather than its transformation—and this held true in economics as well. The bureaucratic collectivism to which Leninism gave rise effectively transferred ownership from an economic to an ideologico-political elite; but it gave ownership little meaning beyond the traditional one of domination. Not surprisingly, the collectivist owners have matched their corporate counterparts in the ability both to exploit labor and to despoil the environment: the “socialist” pollution exuded by the paper mills of Český Krumlov differs from its capitalist counterpart only in its greater immunity from protest by the disenfranchised labor force. Bureaucratic collectivism can provide little inspiration for the technologically mature societies—including the Soviet Union.

Nor has the social democratic attempt to civilize ownership by holding it to social responsibilities provided a model of a liberated society. The welfare state has probably given

¹ *Common Civil Code*, Register of Judicial Laws, no. 946, paragraph 354. The Code remained in force in Czechoslovakia until 1950.

its citizens a greater degree of personal freedom and social security than any society since the Industrial Revolution, but it, too, retains the idea that domination is the content of ownership. Tenant vandalism in public housing duplicates the effects of slumlord neglect, while Britain's "socialist" trade unions sometimes wield their power with as much regard for the public weal as did Commodore Vanderbilt. The achievements of welfare-state socialism may be less ambiguous than those of collectivism, but they are hardly inspirational. Taking from the rich and giving to the poor is a noble and even necessary activity, but historically it is the merest beginning. If socialism is to make a unique contribution to both the developing countries and the technologically mature societies, it must offer a vision of a liberated society that would not simply transfer formal ownership or compensate for its inequities but would break the bond between ownership and alienation.

The recognition of this bond is perhaps the distinctive socialist contribution to the making of modern political consciousness. The mere recognition of alienation as a basic trait of modern social existence is itself more Hegelian than Marxist, and it remains so in spite of the recent cult of "the young Marx." Nor is a stress on the importance of the social as against the individual dimension of human experience uniquely socialist. The socialist contribution has been a recognition that alienation is not simply a spiritual phenomenon but also an experiential one, acted out not only in the subjective relations of the ego but also in the tangible relations of human beings to each other and their material world. More specifically, it is the recognition that the modes of ownership inherited from an earlier age are no longer adequate for mediating the relationship of human to human and to their social and material world. The alienation of the human in postindustrial society cannot be overcome

by moral exhortation to love and stewardship, whether we call it moral rearmament, Consciousness III, or "a new socialist morality." Something more is needed: a transformation of the rationale and forms of ownership that underlie alienation.

Socialist attempts to achieve this end, however, thus far have done more to discredit than to realize it. From the start, socialist theory and practice were marked by a basic contradiction in the socialist analysis of ownership, its diagnosis of what precisely makes ownership alienating—and so also in its prescriptions for transforming ownership. It is easy to oversimplify, but there is considerable justification for interpreting this contradiction within socialism as the difference between interpreting alienation as the effect of *being deprived of property* and of interpreting it as the effect of *possessing property*. In his "Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*" Marx sees the impoverishment of the German proletariat—that is, its freedom from property—as the quality that will enable it to carry out an apocalyptic revolt against a system that exploits it and deprives it of property. This difference in turn is reflected in social strategies as contradictory as distributing large estates among the peasants and expropriating small holdings for state farms. Ultimately, it is the difference between the strategy of welfare-state socialism, which seeks to liberate workers from poverty, and of bureaucratic collectivism, which seeks to liberate them from property. The roots of the contradiction may lie in the radically different and socially conditioned experience of property among socialism's founders. The socialist movement, after all, has always been an alliance of outsiders, the specially privileged and the specially deprived—"the progressive intelligentsia" and the proletariat. Intellectuals and proletarians can pledge allegiance to a common ideology and share a common abhorrence of exploitation. But the stereotypes of property that appear obvious to the one are, to the other, radically different.

Marx may have written of and perhaps for the proletariat, but he was the son of an affluent upper-middle-class family. Most of his life he derived his sustenance not from wage labor but from private means—in large part the largesse of a factory-owner friend, Friedrich Engels. Similarly, Lenin was the son of a banker and a noblewoman—again, anything but a proletarian. By contrast, the mass of their followers had little experience with private means. For the most part, they were workers for whom the wherewithal of daily existence was not a trivial distraction from work but its very content and goal.

Speaking of property as “theft,” like Proudhon, or as “soulless commodity,” like Marx, reflects the condition of the privileged. The lived bond between a human and his world is forged in labor: tilling the soil or wielding a tool is what makes an object genuinely “mine,” not an accidental possession analogous to the object of theft. It is the labor a subject invests in the object that makes the object an extension of his being rather than a soulless commodity. The privileged, no matter how “progressive,” inevitably lack this experience. Intellectual work may be no less valuable and productive than that of a laborer, but by its very nature it is experientially distinct from the intellectual’s income and the objects he can buy with it. A man of private means or a salaried professional may well “deserve” his reward, but he understandably experiences his sustenance as autonomous and as a distraction from his work. To be sure, such work still has its objective counterparts: the opportunity to write and publish is as real a part of it as tilling the soil and reaping its harvest. Yet the modern intellectual’s sense of freedom from immediate material concern—from property—is real. On the level of socially conditioned forms of experience, it is quite understandable that many socialist intellectuals speak of liberation from property, or insist that the forms of property simply do not concern them.

Quite understandably, however, the de-

mand for liberation from property makes as little sense to a worker as a demand for liberation from the freedom of the press would to the intellectual. While frequently supporting demands for expropriation of large productive units, the workers have usually done so in the name of *appropriation* of property. In a laborer’s experience property is anything but a soulless commodity. The soil he tills is a part of his very being, the tools he uses are extensions of his muscles. This is no less true of the industrial worker than of the individual craftsman or the small farmer. There may be “property-less classes,” but there can be no “property-less men” as there are no disembodied souls. The industrial worker may detest the factory where he has spent the major part of his life, but, as with a bad marriage, it is still an intrinsic part of him, his home and his extension in the world. The oldtimers, hanging around the shop after retirement, provide a painful reminder both of the need to belong and of the very basic sense of belonging that work forges between a human and the tools he uses, even when that tool is a steel mill. The worker’s wage has to be reduced to the status of bare cash nexus—experientially, it is the tangible bridge between his work and the objects that manifest his care for those who share his immediate world: the warm house, the clothes, the food on the table, even the garish plaster dwarf in his garden. A worker’s burden is precisely the lack of property: it is deprivation which seems to hinder his self-realization. His appropriative demand for the ownership of his land or tools, for higher wages, or even for the product of his labor is no fetishism of property at all—it is a demand for recognition of his identity, strictly analogous to a writer’s demand for the freedom to publish.

I have stressed the analogy between the two sets of experiences, since on the level of the primary relation of the human and his world that analogy is real. But on the level of socially conditioned forms of experience, it is the difference between the experience

of the laborer and the experience of the intellectual that counts the most. For the one, ownership holds out a promise of freedom from care and a place in the world, to the other it suggests the bondage to objects. One set of experiences quite naturally issues in a demand for appropriation of property, the other equally naturally in a demand for liberation from property.

This is the contradiction Karl Marx sought to resolve, valiantly and in vain, by interpreting the protest against deprivation and the demand for freedom from property as two stages of a continuous socialist development. The formula resolved nothing, but it papered over the contradiction, and, as long as socialists were in opposition, this was all that was needed.

When revolution in Russia and electoral victories in the West confronted socialists with the responsibility of creating an alternative to capitalist ownership, the compromise broke down. The demand that all humans become owners and the demand that all humans be freed of ownership issued in radically different alternatives to capitalist ownership, both legitimate yet fundamentally incompatible.

In semifeudal Russia, with its diminutive working class and long tradition of elitist autocracy, the revolutionaries set themselves the task of "abolishing property"—and since even Russians are not pure spirits but incarnate men with material needs, they settled for an attempt to make property anonymous, collective: property without individual owners.

Successive Soviet civil codes distinguished three forms of property. The first category, socialist property (owned by the state or the collective), includes all means of production—land, tools, factories—on the assumption that a tool is not something a human uses but rather something he hires another to use. The second category, personal property, is restricted to goods that a person consumes

rather than uses in his work, and that he receives from society (in effect from the state, as sole owner of the means of production) in recognition of his needs (health services, vacations) or of his contribution (wages, consumer goods). The third category, private property, refers to possession of means of production, at times tolerated in practice (NEP, private plots) but always condemned in principle as incompatible with socialism.

In collectivist theory, only the means of consumption can be objects of individual ownership—the means of production belong to the collective. And so labor, which in experience belongs to a person perhaps more intimately than anything else, is treated as a means of production. An individual may use it in personal consumption (building a weekend hut, playing a sport), but he may not withhold it (having no job constitutes the felony of parasitism). Nor may he use it to produce a private income even when such use requires no ownership of tools (accepting a fee for guiding a tourist or for making a repair, though common practice, enjoys no legal sanction). The liberation from property is complete. With the exception of wages, which to some extent remain tied to individual effort, the system fulfills the vision of liberation from property.

Although ownership has become anonymous, it is still real. The state, in effect, becomes a holding corporation. Property is not "free"—a factory is not a spontaneous growth like a wild tree, providing fruit to all who'll pick it. It is controlled by the state. The collectivist approach to property is reminiscent of those monastic orders that combined the freedom of poverty with the security of property by having their chapter houses, lands, and flocks owned nominally by the Church at Rome. A more ominous analogy suggests itself as well: slaves, after all, constituted a class free from all property, contributing according to ability and compensated according to minimal need. In the collectivist vision, however, the result was to be perfect freedom, because the own-

ers would supposedly be the collective of the workers, peasants, and soldiers themselves. The owned would be the owners, thereby effecting a dialectical transformation of total bondage into perfect freedom.

The intent was pure, the result not. As the collectivist bureaucracy came more and more to exercise the prerogatives of owners, collective ownership became formal and abstract. By contrast, the breaking of the bond between individual humans and their most intimate embodiment, their tools and their labor, remained painfully tangible and, in contrast with capitalism, universal. In the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, *socialist property* rapidly becomes not *ours* but *theirs*. The workers notoriously experience no living bond between themselves and their work and tools. Large-scale pilfering, abuse of property, and dismally low work morale on the job—in sharp contrast to the initiative and competence in the nonsanctioned after-hours enterprises and on private plots—testify to a high degree of alienation.

The abolition of private property—in the technical sense—in turn effectively destroyed the living bond that even capitalism had preserved, if only for economic rather than humanitarian reasons, between the small farmer or artisan and the most intimate counterparts of his being, the soil he tills and the tools he uses. The scars left by the forcible expropriation of small holdings, collectivization of cattle and small shops heal slowly if at all, as the perennial crisis of agriculture and services in the Communist countries testifies. Finally, the limitation of personal property—the only legally recognized form of identification between a human and his world—to objects of consumption has given rise to a consumerism that may well be the ultimate in fetishism of goods.

The achievements of collectivism are real, even though, given the grim realities of the Soviet police state, they are easy to overlook. In spite of virtually unanimous opposition to the regime in a country like Czechoslovakia, few Czechs or Slovaks would

support the restoration of collective enterprise to private ownership. The failure, however, is no less real, and combined with the strong trade-union tradition of Western socialism, it left Western socialists with little appetite for experimentation with radical changes in ownership.

Social democrats in the West have largely become reconciled with capitalist ownership. What little nationalization they did carry out was predicated not on principle but on pragmatic consideration of public weal. Their strategy in power has focused largely on protecting workers from poverty by pressing the productivity of capitalism into service to relieve its victims. A wide range of social services, ranging from minimum guaranteed income to health care, have gone far toward providing some of the security and freedom of affluence for the nonaffluent, without demanding the bloody price exacted by Communism. Despite the success of that strategy, continued social inequality and labor discontent since the first British Labor victory have shown that no matter how effective the social democratic strategy may be in coping with the ill effects of capitalism, it is not of itself a path to socialism. The idea of a socialist society that fired the imagination of an earlier generation is not, after all, simply of a society in which no one starves. It is the idea of a *liberated* society. It is the vision of a society that would in its economic as well as in its political aspects genuinely belong to the men and women who constitute it rather than to a handful of “owners,” alienated from their fellow humans by the privilege of unearned income and in turn alienating them from their world by the claim to “ownership.” It is a vision of a society without exploitation—conceived in a society in which a large proportion of the national product is appropriated by some 3 percent of the population in the form of unearned income, a society in which the wage earner, no matter how well compensated, still is exploited.

It is this vision that makes even the vic-

tims of Communism cling to the idea of socialism and makes idealists in Western socialist countries look—albeit utterly unrealistically—to the Communist model. But the relevance of socialism is contingent on its ability to offer a valid alternative strategy.

Here now, I would submit, we have to start with a more careful analysis of the nature of ownership and the conditions that make it alienating than socialists hitherto have offered. One of the treatises on ownership, which appeared in Czechoslovakia in the years of Stalinism, illustrates the problem clearly: “. . . there is no ownership given by reason, God, or in any other a priori way [that is, natural law ownership] . . . the will of the owner moves within limits given by the will of the ruling class and concrete property relations are determined on a class basis. . . .”² The author states the dilemma: ownership, which he regards quite traditionally as a formal claim to possession, must be derived either from pure reason, a priori—or be defined arbitrarily by the “will of the ruling class.” Basically, ownership is presented not as a lived reality, but as an arbitrary privilege that must be assigned to a particular individual.

On the level of social reality, from which both socialism and sociology derive their names, this conception simply does not correspond to experience. Here abstract possession is at best a consequence, but in no sense the ground of ownership. Ownership on this level is first of all the experience of a lived interaction between a subject and his world in the course of which meaning becomes actual and matter meaningful. Forms of ownership may vary in different societies and historical periods, but the mutual relation of belonging between a human and his world is more basic than the forms that ex-

press it. It is perhaps the basic fact of being human, as basic as “having-a-body,” “belonging-to-a-context.”

The experience of belonging precedes any formal assignation of property rights, whether by reason, God, or the will of the ruling class. It begins with the child’s appropriation of his body as “mine.” Perhaps the first step is the recognition of the wiggling toes as a part of myself. It is a process of appropriation of a material counterpart of my being: learning to use my body, making it an expression of my self. Nor is there any magic divide between learning to use my toe and learning to use a tool. In both cases, the “I” is becoming actual—and the objects in which the “I” becomes actual, whether hand or tool, come to “belong to me,” as extensions and expressions of my being in the intersubjective world. The acquiring of a body and of its extensions—tools, skills, familiar places, and the recognized place in a social world—is a process of self-realization.

It is important to note, however, that it is not only a process of individuation but a process of socialization as well. The “I” enclosed within my consciousness becomes a part of a social world precisely in the process of embodying itself in objective counterparts. As having-a-body, I am individual, this and no other, but as having-a-body, I am also social, since the body is not private but public, a member and a part both of a material and a social world.

On this level, the ability to own and belong is neither theft nor privilege, but the indispensable counterpart of being actual. It does not alienate—quite the contrary, it is the basis both of individual identity and social participation. Property is in the first place the objective counterpart of my presence in a social and material world. It becomes alienating under special circumstances, and our task is to isolate those circumstances.

For the purposes of political theory, it is crucial to note that collective ownership can similarly be either the basis of individual

² V. Knapp, *Ownership in the People’s Democracy* (Prague, 1952), p. 35; cited by Rozenal, “Přeměna vlastnictví,” *Proměny*, vol. 9, no. 1 (January 1972), p. 61.

identity and social participation or a source of alienation. Children habitually speak of "our house": here the ownership is collective, expressing a collective experience. We live in this house together, together we work on it, keep it up, enjoy it: it is ours, and in each individual case, the house is no less my own for being ours. As with individual ownership, there is nothing *prima facie* alienating about collective ownership when it is an expression of lived experience.

The disruptive element again enters with the formalization of the claim of ownership. When a child expresses the claim, "This is my house (I need not work on it, help keep it clean, but) I have a right to it (for instance, invite friends here) because it is mine," that claim is rightly resented by her siblings. Conversely, when parents appoint themselves the vanguard of the family and preempt the right of making decisions concerning "our" house, the collective ownership becomes alienating and evokes an individualistic, appropriative response: "(this is our house, but) this room is mine—(I live in it, clean it, and) I'll decide what color wallpaper will go on the walls."

With this example we can formulate a provisional principle: the forms of ownership are liberating, sustaining the individual's freedom of identity and participation, if they express a lived relationship of belonging. They become alienating if they disrupt such belonging in the name of an abstract claim to possession. The basis of socialist ownership is belonging, the special reciprocal relationship that life and work forge between a human and a definite part of the social and material world—an object, a place, a right. In that special relationship, a human defines his identity as well as his social participation. The institutions of a socialist society must respect and express that relationship rather than deny it.

I am not presenting this principle as a call for a subjective change in attitude toward property. Desirable though such change may be, it is more likely to follow

from rather than lead to institutional changes. Rather, I am presenting it as an alternative rationale for the critique of capitalist institutions and for designing the institutions of a socialist society. Socialists have criticized past institutions and devised new ones (or, in the name of humanity, refrained from designing new ones) on the assumption that ownership is alienating in virtue of being "private" and that, consequently, public ownership, simply in virtue of being public, would be nonalienating. On the principle, "private bad, public good," they have created, in Eastern Europe, a system of ownership that is not private—and yet is no less alienating than capitalist ownership. Although this system has no "private" owners, the factory worker is no less excluded from participation in the direction of an enterprise and from sharing in the proceeds of production. In contrast to capitalism, however, on the level of small-scale enterprise, the principle, "public ownership good, private ownership bad" led to the systematic elimination of ownership based on self-labor which survived in the capitalist economy—individual enterprise in small production, distribution, and service. Not the protests of expropriated capitalists but the staggering human, social, political, and economic cost of the dogmatic crusade against individual enterprise was the major factor inducing Western socialists to retreat to the humane but innocuous aims of a welfare state compatible with capitalism.

Yet institutions in the East did not fail because they were "too socialist." Nor did they fail because of an erroneous subjective attitude to property. They failed because the rationale in terms of which they were designed, "public good, private bad," did not identify correctly these characteristics of ownership that make it alienating. It led socialists to ignore the pressing problem of alienation in large-scale productive complexes—after all, once nationalized, such enterprises were public and in principle good, even if the workers did not seem to realize it.

Socialist institutions do not have to wait for a new subjective attitude to be effective—that would be a long wait indeed. They do, however, have to be based on a principle that correctly identifies the root of alienation—the divorce between work and ownership. Against the collectivist principle, “public good, private bad,” I would sum up the principle I am advancing as “self-labor good, hired labor bad,” or in more general terms, applicable to large-scale production, “participating labor good, exploited labor bad.”

Individual ownership of one-man and co-operative enterprises, essential in the primary and tertiary sectors of the economy, is entirely compatible with that principle. In such enterprise ownership is fully coextensive with the belonging established by life and labor. Yet, collectivist ownership, vested nominally in “the people” at large but effectively exercised by a centralized state agency, both in the direction of production and in appropriation of the product, is just as incompatible with that principle as capitalist ownership. The state, even a state claiming to “represent the people,” does not contribute labor and so cannot own. The only “owners” of a factory can be the women and men whose labor makes that factory a producing unit and transforms a soulless machine into a means of production.

Certainly, a socialist factory, just as a capitalist one, must distinguish ownership and technical direction. The first is based on participation, the second on expertise. Directors and managers have to be hired on the basis of competence, not participation. The workers alone can be the owners: whether directly or through elected representatives, they alone can hire (and fire) directors and managers and decide how proceeds will be used and distributed. The basic socialist principle here is that those who work also own—both the tools and the product of their work—and that no one, whether individual, corporation, or state agency, whether in virtue of inheritance, stockholding or a nationalization decree, can or need

to possess tools he does not use or value he does not create.

In this sense, socialism is a direct continuation of the struggle for freedom that has motivated the social development of the West since the middle ages. In this struggle the enemies have been both the possessors—the individuals who claimed possession of the world—and the ingrained human fear of freedom.

The Reformation fought the first round in the struggle against the possessors—and against the need for possessors. Fitfully, gropingly, with many false starts and lapses, it has given us the conception of moral community as the *communio viatorum*, a community of free human beings, under God, who dare assume what in the jargon of another era was called “the freedom through which Christ made us free.” It is the daring vision of humans who give up both the constraints and the comforts of a Vicar of Christ—or, in Dostoevsky’s image, of the Grand Inquisitor who would shoulder the ultimate responsibility; of humans willing to assume the freedom and the responsibility for decisions of faith and morals. It is the vision of a free Church that belongs to the believers who constitute it—a community of believers without a human possessor.

The struggle for democracy was a continuation of this battle. The greatest obstacle to a politically free society has been the inability and unwillingness of men and women to imagine a state without a possessor, without a king or a prince or at least a class upon whom to shift the ultimate responsibility for social decisions. Cromwell’s commonwealth failed because humans could not conceive of a state without a possessor and because humans were willing to give up their freedom in exchange for a king who would make the social decisions and bear the responsibility. The Marxist conception of the “leading role of the Party” thrives on that lingering inability of men and women to

conceive of a state that is the public servant of a community of free humans and so has no possessor. The “leading role of the Party” thrives on the unwillingness of humans to assume the responsibility of freedom: it is easier to grumble about “them” than to assume the responsibility that belongs to us and to me individually when we are free. Democracy is the political equivalent of the Reformation: the conception of society as community of free humans who accept the responsibility for governing themselves and dare do without masters upon whom the blame can be shifted.

In retrospect the idea of a possessor in morals or in politics appears entirely fortuitous. Yet a century ago in central Europe it seemed no less self-evident that a village could not simply belong to the farmers who lived and worked in it—had to “belong” to this or that count or duke who had long since ceased to exercise any administrative function and who might simply have “bought” a group of villages he had never seen from another count—to whom they may have been “awarded” in turn by an emperor whose armies had conquered the land a hundred years ago. In the Austrian imperial army, each regiment had its possessor—*Inhaber*—a civilian aristocrat with the honorary rank of a colonel whose sole function was to “own” the regiment—and that, too, seemed completely natural.

Democracy broke the old habit in politics: today the challenge is to break it in economics as well. The great, irreversible achievement of collectivism has been precisely that, as the Reformation in morals and democracy in politics, it has freed its subject—enslaved in every other way—of the pernicious habit of assuming that, of course, every industrial enterprise must have an “owner.” No one who has lived in Eastern Europe can get over his first shock of incomprehension upon being told in the West that this or that factory complex “belongs” to the Smith family—who may live a thousand miles away, may have nothing to

do with this factory, and yet is said to possess it and to claim a right to its proceeds. It is a shock analogous to the shock the Americans of a hundred years ago experienced on being told, in central Europe or in Russia, that a particular village “belonged” to a certain count. Collectivism did not liberate the workers—it could not do that—but it did demonstrate the utter absurdity of the claim that the investment of labor, capital, or effort does not only create a personal belonging and a right to compensation, but earns for a person’s descendants a claim to perpetual possession.

As Marx recognized, corporate capitalism is teaching an analogous lesson, even if far more slowly and less painfully. By replacing the individual entrepreneur with a mass of anonymous stockholders, it illustrates the fictitious absurdity of the idea of possession—and at the same time makes the “possessor” superfluous. This is not a question of technical direction of an enterprise: certainly, any working collective, especially one as complex as a modern corporation, must include experts and technicians charged specifically with the direction of an enterprise. What it does not need is an “owner,” whether individual or private. The workers may not be able, in their spare time, to direct a factory, but they—and only they—can own it: directors can be hired by those to whom the enterprise belongs, whose labor makes it genuinely theirs—the employees, from the manual worker to the managers.

The Yugoslavs accomplished this with a system of Workers’ Councils, elected by all the employees, which do not displace the expert directors but do displace the “owners.” The Czechoslovaks moved in the same direction—until Soviet occupation restored central direction and state ownership. In America, despite isolated experiments, the idea of a Workers’ Council made up of elected representatives of employees and possibly elected representatives of the public might seem too discontinuous with native

development, but a system of issuing voting shares solely on the basis of actual involvement in the work of the enterprise—that is, the lived belonging—is entirely feasible. It would be even consistent with the use of nonvoting shares as a source of investment capital (though the sale of such shares, because of the pernicious social effect of unearned income, remains problematic unless it is restricted to other socialist enterprises).

The mechanics may differ, but the principle remains the same: socialist ownership is not a legal fiction but a living relationship forged by life and work. No one can be denied the ownership he creates by his work—and no one, whether the state or an individual, can claim abstract “possession.”

In the case of humans working individually—and even in a highly sophisticated economy such labor remains essential, especially in the tertiary sector of service and distribution and in some sectors of agriculture—that principle will result in “private” ownership. If the process of labor is individual, so is that of ownership. An individual clearly can, by his own work, “build a business”—and claim it as his own. What he cannot do within the limits of socialist ownership is to “hire” another to work “for” him. Such labor would again become alienating: the employee, by his labor, also builds a stake in the business. He can be a partner, whether on a straight cooperative basis or in proportion to the labor he invests, but he cannot be what earlier rhetoric aptly termed a “wage slave.” To be sure, in practice it may well be necessary for economic reasons to permit the hiring of employees, but the point is that it is a matter of privilege, granted for reasons of common welfare—and always subject to revision. It cannot become a matter of right.

In the case of two or more humans working together, as in a three-man barbershop, a repair service, or a collective farm, the principle of socialist ownership—that ownership reflects labor—would take the

form of cooperative ownership, since the work is done cooperatively. In the case of a factory, it would entail a collective ownership, exercised by the collective through a Workers’ Council. Finally, in the case of public service, whether in transportation, medicine, or basic industry, it would entail social ownership, exercised by a council of elected representatives of the employees and elected representatives of the public they serve. Throughout, however, the principle is the same: ownership follows labor; the only owner of a tool, whether that tool is 200 m² of a backyard plot or a steel mill, is the human who uses that tool, whether individually, cooperatively, or collectively.

IF SOCIALISM is to inspire and guide social change and not simply apply ideological smokescreens or patchwork remedies to assorted social ills, it must carry out the liberation the Reformation carried out in morals and democracy in politics and in economics. The attempt to do this by retaining the conception of ownership as a formal “right” to dominate and exploit, but transferring that “right” from corporate to institutional owners has failed disastrously—just as the attempt to solve problems of faith and morals by transferring the “ownership” of the Church from the pope to the presbyters failed in religion and the attempt to solve political problems by transferring power from hereditary kings to enlightened despots failed in politics, most recently in Russia. In both areas, it was democracy that succeeded, by transferring responsibility to those over whom power heretofore had been exercised. Democracy might succeed in economics as well. The future relevance of socialism depends on its ability to extend democracy into economics: to substitute for the idea of ownership as a possessor’s formal “right” to dominate and exploit the socialist democratic idea of ownership as a social formalization of the lived reality of belonging. □

Robert L. Heilbroner

Roots of the Socialist Dilemma

Socialism in our time is undergoing a crisis. It is not a crisis of existence, for our age has seen the arrival of socialism on a scale that surpasses the fondest hopes of socialists of the past generation. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that thirty years ago socialism was to be found in only one country whose very survival appeared to be gravely threatened. Today at least a third, possibly half, of the world's population lives under regimes that, however subject to political change, appear indissolubly wedded to socialism as an economic system. In the retrospective glance of the future, ours will certainly be known as the period in which socialism ceased to be a mere wish, a vague destination of history, and became a major part of current reality.

Nevertheless, when we look not to its outward manifestations of success but to its inward state of mind, there is no doubt that socialism is in crisis. For among those individuals who are, so to speak, the fathers of the socialist faith, there is a visible *crise de foi*. In the hectic atmosphere of the newly founded socialist nations—China, Cuba, Chile, the African socialist states—this crisis is submerged by the struggle to install and manage a new form of society against immense obstacles. But in the calmer setting of the Western world, where that most subversive of all activities—reflection—is still tolerated or even encouraged, one discovers a pervasive unease.

Let me give a few examples of this unease. Less than ten years ago, Paul M. Sweezy, perhaps the leading American Marxian economist, declared that “The *differentia specifica* of socialism as compared with capitalism

is public ownership of the means of production.”¹ Yet more recently Sweezy has admitted, “I no longer think this goes to the heart of the matter. But I have no neat formulas or definitions to replace it with.”²

Another critic has spelled out the substance of Sweezy's doubts:

Classical socialism has . . . usually resulted merely in state agencies running state industries in an authoritarian economy, leaving unfulfilled a host of such humanist ideals as freedom, democracy, equality and cooperation. . . . Perhaps most critical in human terms is state-socialism's dynamic tendency toward hierarchy and centralization, for this reduces individual and social responsibility, thereby destroying the basis both for freedom and for a practice and ethic of voluntary cooperation.³

Perhaps Irving Howe has expressed the prevailing mood most vividly:

The whole tragic experience of our century, I would submit, demonstrates this to be one of the few unalterable commandments of socialism: the participation of the workers, the masses of human beings, as self-conscious men preparing to enter the arena of history. Without that, or some qualified version of it, socialism is nothing but a mockery, a swindle of bureaucrats and intellectuals reaching out for power.⁴

¹ *Monthly Review*, October 1963, cited in Howard Sherman, *Radical Political Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), chap. 15.

² *Ibid.*

³ Gar Alperovitz, “Notes Toward a Pluralist Commonwealth” (unpublished manuscript, to appear in his forthcoming *The Long Revolution*).

⁴ *DISSENT*, October 1971, p. 461.

Thus, starting from many different vantage points, these critics concur that something is missing from the traditional definition of socialism as a society that can be characterized simply in terms of the public ownership of the means of production and the presence of planning. And the reason for the dissatisfaction is not difficult to discover. Our age has encountered with shocking force the problems inherent in two processes of world history—on the one hand, the cumulative addition to our technological capabilities; on the other, the relatively unchanged level of our social and political capabilities. We have faced, to a degree never before experienced in history, a wholly unequal contest between our ability to control the physical environment and thus to alter the setting of society, and our inability to control the political and social repercussions to which these environmental changes give rise.

Before this technological juggernaut, socialism as well as capitalism have found themselves virtually helpless. How to humanize production on a vast scale; how to organize enormous networks of collective effort without equally enormous networks of bureaucratic controls; how to spur incentive without catering to greed; how to adduce political participation without manipulation—these are problems that confront every advanced society and that have found solutions in none.

Thus the immediate crisis of socialism appears in a widespread uncertainty as how to manage the societies that socialism will inherit or that it is fast at work building. Not surprisingly, nothing like unanimity marks the present socialist debate as to how to avoid the problems I have mentioned. Everywhere we find a chastened awareness that planning is a word far easier to pronounce than to spell out, but a debate still rages as to whether this requires more efficient centralization or a much greater degree of decentralization. So too there is general agreement that “democracy” is an indispensable condition for socialism, but nothing like

agreement as to the limits of dissent to which a socialist citizen may go. In the same way, alienation is an ailment on which all socialists fasten their gaze, but whose prescribed remedies range from a return to the simplicities of small-scale communal life to the final liberation of labor through total mechanization. And finally, it is surely grounds for rueful commentary that the two socialist nations that have consciously sought to curb the bureaucratic phenomenon—Yugoslavia and China—each regard the approach of the other as a betrayal of socialism.

I DO NOT call attention to the specter of unease that is haunting socialism in a mocking vein. On the contrary, I believe its present intellectual disarray to be a sign of strength, not of weakness. Now that socialism has ceased to be a mere wishful projection of history it must come to grips with the disconcerting realities and paradoxes of life, and the price of this coming-to-grips is inevitably a mood of sobriety. The assurance and clarity that were appropriate for socialism at one stage of its career would only be evidence of its dogmatism or barrenness at another. I hope that the present temper of inquiry, self-doubt, and uncertainty does not give way prematurely to a set of intellectual convictions and institutional commitments that socialism (or any other social philosophy) is not in a position to afford.

Hence I shall say nothing more about the substance of the contemporary socialist unease insofar as it concerns the search for institutions. But my reticence is not only an admission that I do not know how socialism should be structured. Rather, it reflects my belief that the roots of the socialist crisis lie deeper than its current confusion before the challenges of technology, bureaucracy, and democracy. For behind the uncertainty with which socialism faces these problems is a much more fundamental uncertainty of which socialists themselves are only gradually becoming aware. It is an uncertainty concerning the nature of the social existence

to which socialism aspires. Is the goal of socialism a society that will encourage the freest expression of individuality in art, in sexual and social relations, in political thought and act? But does this not conflict with the vision of socialism as an organic society, one that applies the collective wisdom and judgment of the community in establishing *norms* of behavior, *shared* moral standards, a *unifying* vision of the good life? What are to be the bounds of freedom? What are to be the standards of conduct?

Until socialists know the nature of the society they seek, it will be difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine the institutional means best suited for the future. But that is not the only problem. Behind the hesitation and ambivalence of its social visions are the conflicts in its conceptions of man himself. Is the human being an infinitely plastic creature, capable of "making" himself without any boundaries or constraints other than those he imposes on himself? If so, what boundaries *should* he choose? Or is there an "essence" of man whose primordial and persistent existence can be ignored only at the gravest peril? But if there is such an essence, what is it? What constraints and boundaries does it ordain for men?

Now I cannot hope, in this brief space, to elucidate a problem of such vast dimensions and ancient lineage as the question, What is man? But perhaps I can add some measure of clarification to the present socialist crisis by asking socialists to think about the problem itself in a *radical* way.

What is the "radical" approach to the question of human nature? We get a first definition of the idea if we contrast it to what we usually call the "conservative" view of man. As we ordinarily use both terms, these two words express conflicting judgments regarding the political capabilities of man. Although there are many conservative philosophies, all are marked by an explicit distrust

of the motives and capacities of men when they engage in political action. In direct contrast, radicalism rests its faith precisely in the ability of men and women to put their motives and capabilities to effective and morally laudable political use.

We shall return later to the so-called conservative skepticism with regard to political behavior. What I want to examine now is the relevance of the radical faith itself to the crisis of socialism. For unless I am mistaken, much of the unease that underlies the socialist mood stems from the unexamined implications of what it takes to be the radical view of man.

AS A DECLARATION of faith in the human capacity for self-direction, radicalism is, as we all know, a very modern idea, scarcely older than the great political revolutions of 1776 and 1789. At its core is the advocacy of an ever-expanding exercise of conscious control by the great masses of men over their individual and collective destinies—here is Irving Howe's entrance of the workers into history.

Although it was originally propounded as a political rather than economic ideal, it is from this declaration of faith in the self-governing potentialities of man that socialism draws its strength. For what is attractive to the radical mind in the conception of socialism is above all the idea that a socialist society is best suited for the active development of the human capacity for self-determination. That is why the radical embraces socialism boldly and eagerly, in contrast to the defensive posture so characteristic of the conservative who chooses those institutions most likely to buffer and dampen the potentially dangerous proclivities of the political animal.

I stress this radical commitment to socialism as a vehicle for human self-direction for a very important purpose. It is here that socialism rests its case for the basic institutional changes it has traditionally sought—the replacement of private by public

command over productive property and the disposition of output. However short these traditional aims may fall in bringing about the sufficient conditions for a "humanist" socialism, they are indeed necessary conditions if socialism is to achieve its radical aim of enlarging the area of human self-determination.

The issue is so important in the light of the present self-doubting mood of socialism that I must take a moment to review the argument in its support. Why does socialism insist on the public ownership of productive wealth? Essentially because it maintains that private ownership, under the dynamic conditions of capitalism, constitutes a direct barrier to the widest possible self-direction of man. A society in which less than 2 percent of all family units own some 80 percent of its corporate assets is, from the standpoint of a philosophy that seeks the widest possible individual autonomy, as anachronistic and indefensible as the societies of feudalism or antiquity, where tiny fractions of the population enjoyed the privileges of their social orders.

IT MAY WELL BE, as bitter experience has shown, that socialism will destroy this form of privilege only to replace it with another. In lieu of the aristocracy of wealth, socialism may install an oligarchy of the party elite or of planners. Moreover, as our knowledge of Stalinist Russia makes clear, the gulf between the living conditions of these elites and that of the masses may be as great as that between the capitalist rich and the capitalist masses. Thus I do not maintain that socialism fulfills the radical prescription for self-determination by the mere act of expropriating the expropriators. But I do hold that the abolition of the privileges of wealth associated with capitalism nevertheless constitutes a necessary step for the realization of the socialist ideal.

This is so because noncapitalist forms of privilege, such as those of bureaucratic preferment or naked political or military power,

even when they are more crushing than the privileges of wealth, are nonetheless more transparent and self-evident as privileges. By contrast, what is so inimical to the cause of autonomy within the structure of privileges peculiar to capitalism is that its prerogatives are veiled and masked by the ideology of the market system. No feudal lord, no Egyptian noble, no slaveowner was unaware of his privileged status, although he may not have felt in any way defensive about it. Neither was any serf, peasant, or slave deceived as to the brute realities of the class structure, although he may have resigned himself to it. But what is unique about capitalist society is that most men are unaware of the very presence of privilege within it. The rich congratulate themselves on the money they have "made." Moreover, much of the rest of society, including many of the poor, agree that the rich have *earned* their favored place because of the contribution "their" capital has made to production. In a word, men who are enthralled by the ideology of capitalism do not see, and cannot understand, the difference between the undeniable contribution made to production by the physical artifacts of capital, and the claims made on that production in the name of the private "ownership" of these artifacts. The socialist institution of public ownership, despite its immense problems of administration and bureaucracy, destroys this deep-seated mystique and thus makes possible an advance toward the radical goal of a society of men who understand and therefore command the conditions of their existence.

NOW LET ME ADVANCE a second argument in support of the traditional institutional definition of socialism—an argument that also stems from the radical commitment to individual and collective self-realization. This argument concerns the need to replace the market disposition of resources by a planning mechanism of some sort. Here also harsh experience has taught us that planning, as such, may not succeed in achieving

this aim. Especially in its centralized form, planning has proved inimical to self-determination insofar as it has ignored the preferences by which men express their individuality or has manipulated those preferences as shamelessly as corporate capitalism at its worst. Thus, however useful centralized planning may be for forcing economic growth, once beyond the dire needs of an impoverished society, such planning is a dubious instrument of socialism measured by the criteria of radicalism itself.

Indeed, a telling attack can be mounted against the socialist embrace of planning by conservative economists who point out that the much-maligned market is actually a form of "planning" more conducive to individual autonomy than that of any central planning board. I do not quarrel with this contention but only propose to push the idea of "market planning" to its logical conclusion within the framework of a socialist society. It will then be seen that we can use the market as a planning mechanism for the attainment of radical goals, provided that we intervene at one critical juncture of the process, namely where incomes are set and demand is initially created. Thus planning may well concentrate on the critical determination of income levels, leaving the socialist factory managers thereafter to compete for the purchasing power whose original distribution has received a conscious social approval.

There may be other means of circumventing the bureaucratic incubus of central planning, but that is not my concern here. Rather, I wish only to make the point that the radical aim of systematically expanding the potentialities of all men requires some form of deliberate intervention into the determination and distribution of society's output. Until society has consciously broached and answered the question of what is to be a "fair" allocation of the claims of each individual against the community, the radical goal of individual autonomy cannot be achieved.

These considerations make it clear, I trust, that I believe in the relevance and legitimacy of the now much-questioned institutional definition of socialism as a society in which the ownership of productive resources has been removed from private hands and in which rational planning has replaced the blind play of an unsupervised distribution of individual buying power. This declaration of faith should permit me to return to an examination of the radical philosophy itself. For having declared my belief in the legitimacy of the basic institutions of socialism, I must now declare my further conviction that radicalism, insofar as it depends on a commitment to the limitless perfectibility of man, is an inadequate guide either for the construction of the society that those institutions must undergird, or for the definition of the nature of the human beings they must serve.

What is deficient in the radical view? Its most vulnerable aspect clearly lies in its initial premise: that man *is* perfectible and capable of moral improvement by conscious design. Essentially this is a premise beyond empirical demonstration. It is a statement of faith—as is also the contrary assertion that man possesses a propensity for evil that will express itself despite all efforts to repress or expunge it.

Yet, however open to question, this is not where I find the radical belief lacking. Whatever man's inherent capacity for evil, I feel reasonably secure in believing that the realized and overt expressions of that evil owe more to nurture than to nature. If one member of every pair of identical twins born in the ghetto and the suburbs could be switched at birth, as in fairy stories, does anyone doubt that the subsequent social histories of those twins would reflect their changed environments at least as much as their unchanged endowments?

It is possibly more difficult to retain a belief in the perfectibility of man if one looks to history, where mass murder has reached

a kind of crescendo in the wars of the 20th century. Yet I cannot even read the historical record in a wholly pessimistic frame of mind. There have been changes in human behavior in the Western world (where the effort to perfect man has been largely concentrated) whose importance we may overlook in our appalled recognition of the extent to which evil still flourishes. Slavery—a condition once taken for granted—has disappeared. Torture, not too long ago publicly offered for the delectation of the spectator, is now conducted in shame and secrecy. Mental illness is no longer the occasion for ridicule and punishment. Even war itself is now the object of a widespread moral revulsion to a far greater extent than ever in the past.

It would be fatuous to claim that the historical evidence is clearly on the side of radicalism. It is quite enough, however, to maintain that it does not contradict the belief in some degree of moral and social plasticity for man. To put it differently, I see no reason, based in history, to doubt that a society that devoted its full efforts to the cultivation of the moral, aesthetic, and intellectual capabilities of its people could elevate the prevailing level of social decency as much above present-day society as the level of Sweden is elevated above that of the Union of South Africa.

WHAT IS the weakness of radicalism, then, if we accept its faith in the capacity for human improvement? The answer lies not in the idea of perfectibility as such but in certain human attributes to which the criterion of perfectibility does not apply and to which the radical creed therefore pays no heed. Since I have used the word “radicalism” to describe the idea of humanity that rests on perfectibility, let me, for the moment, use the word “conservative” to indicate these missing aspects of human experience.

I begin a discussion of these aspects by returning again to the wariness with regard to political behavior that I have already singled

out as typically “conservative.” Now what is it that conservatives are wary about? To the radical it seems to be only a fear that the masses will throw off their habits of subservience and rise against their masters. But this is too easy a reading of the conservative view. For the conservative warnings apply equally to those at the top as well as to those at the bottom. This conservative caution goes beyond the obvious warnings with respect to the behavior of the political leaders of socialism. It is the thought that even men who have “everything” cannot be trusted to act well. Men are dangerous political animals because there is an inner core that remains beyond the reach of reason, deaf to the counsels of morality, indifferent to the best-intentioned policies.

In a word, the conservative sees that man, at the very center of his being, is “free” in the sense of being unpredictable and untamable; and that this freedom is not an attribute that is necessarily congenial with social order. It is thus a view of man at once more hopeful and more skeptical than that of the radical—more hopeful in its denial that men can be totally programmed, more skeptical in its denial that this unexpungeable individuality is an attribute that unfailingly redounds to the higher purposes of society.

THIS IS a view with profound relevance for the radical reconstruction of society. For it locates within man himself an imperative reason for a socialist commitment to the spontaneity and individuality of life. A recognition of an inviolable inner preserve of the personality informs the radical that when he speaks of the “liberation” of the human spirit, he is not merely projecting an ideal of what man could or should be, but also acquiescing in a realization of what man *is*.

Such an acquiescence requires more than a pietistic affirmation for socialism. For the conception of an unreachable core of behavior comes squarely into conflict with the idea of the limitless perfectibility of man.

To the extent that radicalism sees in every instance of human misbehavior—in every instance of criminality, laziness, amorality, political disaffection—a *social* fault, it erects a vision of man that invites an indefinite degree of social correction. But if the “conservative” conception is correct in emphasizing elements or layers of the personality that cannot be managed—or that can be invaded only at the cost of destroying the person—then socialism must reconsider its utopian image of what man can be. This involves the painful admission that perfectibility is not a process that can proceed indefinitely. More than that, it requires the admission that perfectibility is a process that socialism does not want to press indefinitely. In the end a socialist society must reconcile itself to an indeterminate space within which men can express their wishes and drives, *whether or not these conform to the ideals and goals of socialism itself.*

But it is not only with regard to freedom that socialism has something to learn from the “conservative” view of human nature. Perhaps even more important is the question that this view raises with respect to the collective morale, the sense of shared well-being that socialism also aims to achieve. Here the focus of attention turns away from the problem of individuality and spontaneity to the opposite question of the norms and values that socialism should incorporate.

Now it is no more my intention to discuss the specific nature of these norms than it was to define the boundaries for the expression of the free human personality. In the present case, as in the former, I wish only to stress the relevance of the “conservative” view of man in locating a psychobiological base that may provide a more secure foundation for socialist thought than that offered by the radical faith in human perfectibility. For with regard to the problem of norms, as with that of individuality, it seems conservatism has something to say that is very different from the standard views of radicalism, and of the utmost importance.

The difference between the conservative and the radical view of norms derives from a difference in the perspective with which each views the drama of life. The radical views life as an epic, a quest, to be consummated in the future. The conservative views it as a process of reenactment, of renewal, to be justified in the present. And from this perspective the conservative again sounds warnings for the radical. Liberate man? By all means! But liberate him from what? From all that is personal as well as all that is selfish? From all that is ancient as well as all that is archaic? From all that is ritual as well as all that is rote? From everything nonrational as well as everything that is mistaken? From all faith as well as all fetishism?

These questions pose the crucial issue of what *kinds* of norms and values will best sustain a socialist society in the long run. To the radical, intent on perfecting man, norms tend to be hortatory and demanding. For the conservative, intent on reaffirming a persistent elemental nature in man, they tend to be supportive and reassuring. As such, these “conservative” norms have an unrecognized—perhaps a surprising—relevance for socialism. For I do not think it is merely a romantic yearning of our age that makes it discover in primitive cultures a wholeness and psychological security whose absence we feel so keenly in our own. The aim of a socialist society cannot be a return to primitivism, for that would totally conflict with its faith in the capacity of men to understand and order their own lives. But neither can its aim be the relentless pursuit of an ever-receding goal of perfection. In the end, socialism must seek to build a society that is at least as interested in the celebration and preservation of the timeless rules of cherished lifeways as in the continuous pioneering of ever new modes of social existence.

It is with some misgiving that I offer these counsels as being relevant for socialism to-

day. It will be said that the need for social change is so overwhelming, at home as well as abroad, that words such as these can only work harm by instilling doubts where there should be resolve—and that for all the disclaimers one may make, conservatism remains and must always remain a view that favors complacency over indignation and that encourages passivity in the face of social evil.

I am aware of a grain of truth in these charges. I have entirely ignored the practical problems of achieving a socialism that combines the indispensable elements of economic structure we have discussed, along with the political and social essentials of a good society. During the long years in which that effort must be made, considerations such as mine may seem remote, almost diversionary. Yet even—or should I say especially—in the midst of the tactical decisions, uncertainties, and compromises that political struggle must bring, socialism needs some sense of its ultimate objectives, some philosophical counterpart of a magnetic North, past which its compass needle may swing but to which it will return.

The problem, however, is that socialists will not find such a lodestone unless they formulate a surer conception of the human being than the one they now entertain. Thus even in the throes of political turmoil, I ask whether it can be detrimental for the cause of socialism to consider and reconsider the nature of man. More than that, I press the question of whether socialism *must* not reflect on the limitations of the creed of perfectibility, or the elusive core of the individual, or the existential anxieties inextricable from life, as it seeks to build institutions in the name of man.

It is another matter when I turn to the second criticism and consider whether “conservatism” can ever be absorbed within and reconciled to the socialist faith. Here I con-

fess to a certain discomfort. However purified of apologetics, there remains a tincture of regret in conservatism. Perhaps it is for that reason that radicalism and conservatism, like oil and water, can be shaken up together but cannot really blend.

But here too I have an answer that may save the day. For it is not really a conservative *philosophy* that I am recommending for socialism; indeed, that is why I have used quotation marks so often around the word “conservatism.” Instead, what I have extracted from conservative thought are assumptions about the nature of man that are in themselves only the constitutive elements of a philosophy, socialist or conservative. And what is such a philosophy to be called if it is to be placed in the service of socialism? I have kept until the very end the proper word to describe a faith that includes a strong belief in the limited perfectibility of man and a recognition that man is more complex, obscure, and defiant than the idea of perfectibility alone suggests. The appropriate word for that faith is, of course, *radical*, in its primary sense of penetrating to the roots.

This is not a mere trick of words. What socialism needs now is a philosophy that searches for elemental moorings along with programmatic change. I do not know any other way to describe such an outlook, at once forward-looking and inward-looking, other than to call it radical. More important, I believe that in such a truly radical view of man—a view that embraces both his potential and his condition, his possibilities and his requirements, his open-ended future and his never-discarded past—socialism may discover the guiding principle that it now lacks. □

This article is reprinted, with permission, from the Spring issue of *Social Research*.

Ernest Gellner

The Pluralist Antilevelers of Prague

Differences which can be summed up in a few words can mean, in historical reality, enormous, complex, and difficult social transformations.

—PAVEL MACHONIN

The destiny of the so-called socialist societies of Eastern Europe is one of the great questions of our time. The Communist counterreformation may plunge Eastern Europe into the same kind of somnolent torpor which the original Counter-Reformation imposed on Southern Europe, and from which it really has not yet recovered. The abortive Prague Spring remains a good source of evidence for what countervailing forces could possibly save Eastern Europe from such a fate. It was a revolution of intellectuals, a fact that perhaps always augured ill for its final outcome, though it was a hopeful sign for the quality of its literary and scholarly accompaniment.

One of its most remarkable products—quite possibly *the* most remarkable one—is a 619-page tome, *The Czechoslovak Society*,* which its author still managed to bring out toward the end of 1969. It is a collective work by diverse members of a team that had cooperated in a big study of social stratification in “socialist” Czechoslovakia. Its major survey was carried out in 1967, with the very important support of the official statistical services. The various chapters are written in Czech and in Slovak, but at

the end of the book there is a 19-page summary in English.

It is unfortunate that this work is likely to remain inaccessible to most of its potential readers for at least some time. The English summary at the end does not remotely do justice to its richness of thought and documentation (nor, alas, is its English particularly attractive or free from ambiguity).

For this volume indeed constitutes a very remarkable achievement. Had it been produced under politically stable or uninteresting circumstances, in a country whose contemporary condition makes no special claim on our interest, and were it available in an easily accessible language, it *still* would make its mark as a major contribution to the literature on social stratification in industrial societies and would become one of the most important texts in the field.

As it is, the study claims the attention of various sociologists and specialists, but of course its significance and relevance are far wider. It is a major study of stratification in a “socialist” society. It is an important pioneering attempt (even if not wholly successful) to include the dimension of *power* in stratification and to do so under “socialist” conditions. It contains an interesting attempt at a social theory of socialist societies and a general typology of industrial societies. And it contains, in restrained and sober, but very substantial terms, the theory of the

* Pavel Machonin, *et al.*, *Československá společnost: sociologická analýza sociální stratifikace* [“The Czechoslovak Society: A Sociological Analysis of Its Social Stratification”] (Bratislava: Epocha Publishers, 1969).

Czech liberalization movement, both in the sense of offering an explanation of it and of specifying its rationale.

It is the intimate and organic link between the methodological seriousness and thoroughness of the work, and the richness and importance of its ideas, that gives the book its unique flavor and is perhaps its most fascinating feature. The fact that Czechoslovakia is atypical among the East European states in many important ways, of which the authors are fully aware, does not diminish the interest of the book, though it imposes, of course, severe restrictions on any facile extrapolation of its findings.

Before discussing the book further, it may be worth saying a little about what is publicly known of the subsequent fate of its major author and the institutions connected with it. An important source on this is an article in the ideological Party journal *tribuna* (sic), dated October 14, 1970, by a man whom it may be charitable not to name. The article in question, nominally a report on sociology and on the Seventh World Sociological Congress, tells us that Pavel Machonin, the principal author of the book under review, represented in sociology what O. Siř represented in economics, Z Mlynář in political science, and K. Kosík in philosophy. (During the Prague Spring, Mlynář was responsible for an inquiry into the political structure of the Communist party itself.) It tells us that Machonin is now a "political corpse," that he has been expelled from the Party, and that the political battle with revisionism has now been substantially decided, though elsewhere the article implies that not all its representatives have given up the struggle. It also tells us that the Sociological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences had been the "ideological center of revisionism" and, interestingly, that the Party branch at this institution had been consequently dissolved and that a majority of the Czechoslovak Sociological Society had passed a resolution requesting that sociologists all over the world boycott the Seventh

World Congress in Bulgaria, in protest against that country's participation in the military occupation of Czechoslovakia.

Information or reminders of this order can only warm the hearts of that Czech majority which does not welcome the present Stalinism with a human face, and consequently one must wonder whether the author of the article is an opportunist timeserver *and* a fool, who unintentionally gives much comfort to his enemies, or whether on the contrary the article is a double take, deliberately letting slip information under the guise of somewhat nauseating abuse and question-begging denunciation of "petit-bourgeois revisionism." At this distance, it is impossible to tell. The hypothesis of irony is less likely than the straightforward interpretation, but it is by no means excluded, since it is entirely in keeping with the present general situation in Czechoslovakia, the *Švejkovina*, the widespread complicity in a reluctant collaboration which does not defy but endeavors to minimize the consequences of submission. The abuse, however, does highlight the relevant background of the work under review.

Sociology played a crucial role in the liberalization process in Czechoslovakia. (The term "liberalization" was not used, incidentally; "democratization" was preferred.) The full story has not yet been told and ought to be fascinating when it becomes available, both in its ideological and its organizational aspects. Ideologically, the global fashion of sociology in the 1960s coincided and fused with the local impulse toward liberalization. But there was more to it than simple coincidence and conflation. The precondition for the successful liberalization had been an economic and social malaise and stagnation (even actual economic decline), for which plainly no solutions or concepts were available within the official ideology. So it seemed both necessary and permissible to turn to sociology, though of course permission was not granted at once, nor without a prolonged struggle.

A major turning point in favor of the sociologists had come when the Party, at the highest level, not merely allowed sociology to exist, but after prolonged inquiry allowed it a legitimate existence *without defining it*. (Previously, rival definitions had ranged from “bourgeois pseudo-science” to “applied Marxism” or “the study of socialist social forms.”) The importance of existence without definition, without essence one might say, was of course that any definition might well have been used to inhibit research. In the event, one of the invoked, though not sanctioned and enforced, interpretations was that the new work was *adding sociology to Marxism*, which itself was not a sociology at all, though evidently it could serve as the base of one. Whatever other merits this view may lack, it certainly had the signal advantage that if Marxism was not and did not already contain sociology, then naturally the new sociology could not come in conflict with it, and could pursue its own work unhampered.

The organizational aspect of sociology and its participation in the thaw is interesting and amusing. In common with nonsocialist societies, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic had to face the problem of what to teach young technologists, over and above technology itself. An objective need, or the conscience of the pedagogue or of the educational administrator, or who knows what, cannot quite tolerate a higher educational course containing nothing but technology: there must be a bit of humanity, civics, or morality somewhere. Almost symbolically, this little bit extra, by way of literary or philosophical edification, tends to be called “liberal studies” in Britain, and in Eastern Europe it is called Marxism-Leninism.

Now this is all very well as names go, but *what is it?* If you are a director of an institution training, let's say, chemical engineers, or if you are the man under him made responsible for giving that course of Something Extra—what, concretely speaking, do you talk about? They tried Marxist philosophy, but evidently no one could stomach for

very long the drivel about Negation of a Negation and Interpenetration of Opposites. So they tried labor history instead. Now that is a very worthy and genuine subject, and scholarly, and there are even interesting books written about it. But, let us face it, the flesh is weak, and though perhaps it may not be the duller of all subjects, it must at least be in the running for such a title, and it is hard to hold the attention of the young with it. Now sociology and political science (known in Czechoslovakia as *politology*) are—at least during the '60s, the decade of the apotheosis of sociology—quite another matter. So, within the crucial period of the buildup to the Prague Spring, the very extensive and well-centralized network of teachers and centers of Marxism-Leninism was *überschult* to sociology, and sociology itself was placed in the service of finding a way out of the desperate social malaise.

As the rather unsavory *tribuna* article observes, when the Spring came, those who wished to build, in theory and practice, “an unbounded ‘pluralistic’ political system” (as did Mlynář), did so on the basis of the sociological work of Machonin and his colleagues. In 1967, their institute was indeed still called a “Marxist-Leninist” one, though at that time there was a tendency to apologize even for the name.

This much by way of background to the book which, itself, does not indicate it, except at a rather high theoretical level insofar as it considers the general problems facing its own kind of society. It does not stoop to the tactics of down-to-earth political struggle, or its unhappy termination. Nevertheless it is worthwhile to indicate this background; but it is important to stress that the outstanding merit of the book, as a piece of sociological thought and research, is quite independent of the crucial position its authors and sociology occupied in the political struggle.

We cannot summarize all the aspects of this massive and thorough study. The various chapters, concerning the relation of stratification as to complexity of work, life-

style, education, income, prestige, self-image, family, generation, social contacts, and so forth, clearly deserve thorough consideration, from the viewpoint of both substance and method, and above all from a comparative angle. I shall content myself with a partial summary, and some comment, concerning certain key chapters.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the attempt to formulate a typology of possible, relevant types of social stratification (p. 39 *et seq.*). The aim is to identify a characteristically *socialist* kind of stratification. As Machonin observes, one might approach such a model by a kind of inductivist procedure, seeking the shared traits of societies that consider themselves socialist, or are considered to be such. This procedure would have to include not merely Communist states, but also reformist or nationalistic socialism, without regard to their specific culture or level of social development. Machonin rejects such an approach, on the grounds that such a synthetic concept would have very little content, if any. Instead, he prefers the construction of an "ideal type" of socialism, to use his own words, precisely analogous to Marx's construction of an ideal type of capitalism. The notional content of such a "mature socialism" may be rich, and the author notes the danger of its detachment from reality, and of utopianism.

The author clearly believes that, though this danger exists, his work has evaded or overcome it. He notes that the whole of the Czechoslovak development from the 1950s to 1967, and in particular the developments "after January 1968," justify the belief that this ideal type is so not merely in the sense of seeming desirable, but also in the more important sense of corresponding to the real developmental possibilities of industrial societies.

Here I wish to anticipate somewhat the author's line of thought, to make clear to the reader the argument's general direction.

The connection between Machonin's and his colleagues' enormously thorough empirical research into Czechoslovak socialist stratifications and the political morals drawn from them is interesting. It is *not* the case, as the reader might suppose, of a shocked discovery of the form—despite official socialism, so much stratification! *Quite the reverse*. The general argument has the form: despite all the official deformation, so much *good* and desirable stratification, corresponding to the real functional needs of industrial society! But not enough, alas; let us have more of it, and let us call it socialism. (Paraphrasing Huey Long, he might have said that of course one may have liberal pluralism and differentiation in Eastern Europe, but one must call it socialism and indeed, why not.)

It may be relevant at this point to note that Machonin not merely proclaims the Marxist foundations of his thought at the beginning of the book; it is my strong impression that his declaration of faith is sincere. One can of course never be sure about the *pensée intime* of people who have the misfortune of living under a dictatorship. The Marxism to which he declares his loyalty (p. 18) is formulated in extremely abstract terms and might in fact accommodate many of us: it is defined in terms of the "complex and developmental, or structural-genetic character of social phenomena, a developmental dynamism that allows an objective evaluation of progress, inner tensions, and the capacity of human knowledge to advance to greater social understanding, notably by combining theory and empirical work." He rejects economic reductionism, and the absolutization of class conflict. He rejects vulgar Marxism, though interestingly he admits that his own generation had made its first acquaintance with Marxism only in this form and was obliged to overcome its influence. Equally interesting is the proclaimed ambition to use the general Marxist foundations to build a modern sociological theory, and in particular one facilitating the empirical study of contemporary social forms, in-

cluding those which emerged in the course of socialist reconstruction. The significant negative implication of this is that Marxism as yet does not contain a sociological theory—a contention which, as indicated, was important in avoiding the possibility of conflict between Marxism and the newly emergent sociology.

FOR PURPOSES OF COMPARISON, the author suggests six currently relevant types of social stratification: capitalist, dictatorship of the proletariat, bureaucratic, egalitarian, technocratic-meritocratic, and socialist. Of these types, the second is apparently meant to have some relation to the conditions prevailing immediately after the Communist coup of 1948. It is one of the less interesting or surprising, but conclusive, results of the empirical research that this type has no relevance to contemporary Czechoslovakia. The workers as a general class are neither beneficiaries nor homogeneous in their position, nor in any significant sense associated with power. The other types, disregarding capitalism for a moment (which is admitted not to exist in its pure form), are interesting in that they purport to name close alternatives, either in the recent past of the country, or still available as (in the main regrettable) options. Bureaucratic stratification ascribes status on the basis of a monopoly of power and operates distribution so as to favor bureaucrats—power-holders; egalitarian stratification operates on “inverted” ascription in favor of the less qualified and the less productive, who benefit from its distributive principles; whereas the technocratic model ascribes status to technocrats or meritocrats, and also favors them distributively.

When, then, is there socialist stratification? It may be best to offer an abbreviated version of the author’s own words (p. 44 et seq.):

... mature socialism is conceived as a formally and substantially democratic community of effort, based on collective ownership.

... doubtless a socially differentiated society (dominated, but not exclusively, by professional differentiation) and stratified, mainly on the basis of the effectiveness and hence complexity of labor. The span of the stratification of a mature socialist society corresponds to the functional requirements of the development of industrial society ... it is gradual (without excluding altogether the influence of inheritance and ascription) ... and consists of largely open strata. ...

To arise and function, mature socialism requires, apart from favorable international conditions, a certain technical, scientific, and educational level. ...

... this mature socialism is not the only type of social organization possible in an industrial society, though in our view it comes close to an optimal arrangement of the relation between industrial culture and human personality (at least in our conditions). ... No doubt there is a whole array of common traits and tendencies of all industrial societies. ... Various kinds of such societies can be considered as variants of one structure, and the question of their relative merits must be left to the real development and the scientific investigation of reality. ...

Should our conception of socialism seem to some to consist simply of the shared characteristics of modern societies, then such an objection is valid to the extent that we really do not deem it fitting to invent our socialism—we prefer rather to deduce it from the real trends of development. But the criticism is invalid if it underrates the difference of socialism, so defined, from capitalist society, which has as yet never managed to reduce the span of stratification and to turn achievement into the veritable base of social status—or if it underrates its difference from bureaucratic-egalitarian society. Differences that can be summed up in a few words can mean, in historical reality, enormous, complex, and difficult social transformations.

We are now in a position in some measure to sum up the central thesis of the book, and to do it at least partly in terms of its

own very interesting conceptual framework. The book does not polemicize with the "capitalist" variant of industrial society. As we have seen, it leaves the relative merits of the two systems to further developments and future research, and even hints that optimality may hinge on local (presumably historical) circumstances. Its interest in American society, for instance, is largely comparative and methodological. The contrast with which it is genuinely concerned is the one with the conflated "bureaucratic-egalitarian" type of society, which it finds conspicuous in the recent Czechoslovak past. Nevertheless, the general form of the connection between the empirical data and the political moral is more subtle: despite the bureaucratic and egalitarian deformations, a "socialist" pattern in its own terms (i.e., a moderate meritocracy, within bounds of social justice and humanity) has been asserting itself, and it constitutes the main feature of Czechoslovak stratification. But not sufficiently: further economic and social progress hinges on giving this principle free play, and on removing hindrances to its full development.

This argument, be it noted, gives a special nuance to the more conventional theories of pluralism, quite apart from using a new name for it. Other pluralists tend to concentrate on the multiplicity of autonomous groups and institutions, as a necessary means of producing the countervailing forces to the state and possible other dangers to liberty; but they tend to see inequality as an inevitable price paid for this plurality, rather than as making a direct and valuable contribution to social health. In fairness to Machonin, it should be added (though this is not evident from the book) that he also looks forward to an ultimate *releveling*, presumably at a stage of real industrial maturity, following the *deleveling* which he holds necessary at the present stage.

It is well worth following the author in the more detailed exposition of his ideas (pp. 156-70).

The central conclusion of this research into stratification is that social status in Czechoslovakia is determined above all by what the author calls the bundle of social-cultural differentiations: type of work, style of life and leisure, and education. (Note: *not* income or participation in management.) The author goes on to add that although complexity of work plays a primary role within this bundle, he does not interpret the results of the research as a confirmation of its decisive role, precisely because, contrary to his expectations, it is so tightly fused with the other two "social-cultural" components of status.

The author proceeds to comment on power (p. 158):

All this is not to say that the power-political-organizational system played no significant role during this period in forming stratification. For one thing, this macro-research could not catch the occupants of the summits of power, and their stratificational characteristics. But above all, we could not capture the mechanism of the influence of power. . . . We could only infer its role . . . partly from the very reduced participation in political activity by the broader strata . . . and partly from the leveling effect on the standard of living, which by its lack of congruence with social-cultural components betrays the presence of noneconomic pressures. . . .

At the same time we can assert positively that even the sharpest unevenness of power and the greatest leveling of income were unable to prevent people from differentiating in work and above all in leisure according to the cultural parameters of modern socialist society. . . .

People developed their leisure activity in a manner roughly corresponding to their education and type of work, and managed to use their leveled and not always congruent incomes in diverse ways.

On page 160, the author makes some comparative remarks:

. . . We consider the differentiation in complexity of work education and the cultural

use of leisure to be, all in all, close to the analogous differentiations in industrially developed countries, or rather in countries approaching this stage, except that we lack the luxury style of leisure and the luxury orientation of consumption, and that the lower levels of complexity of work, education, and presumably of life-style are relatively larger. . . . Income differentiation we reconsider to be leveled out, in contrast with capitalist countries with their high incomes of the upper strata, and also in comparison with European socialist countries. Political differentiation we consider to be somewhat steep.

He sums up his finding (p. 161 *et seq.*) in relation to the previously postulated typology of relevant forms of stratification: “. . . social differentiation in Czechoslovakia is explicitly noncapitalist . . . forms of ownership play no role, least of all private ownership.”

There can be little doubt about the correctness of these findings, if the influence of property is interpreted in a narrow, literal, and strictly contemporary sense. The only people whose social position is determined by currently and legally owned property are smallholders on marginal (generally hilly) land, whose land was too poor or awkwardly situated to be worth collectivizing. These smallholders are socially and economically at a very low level, comparable to that of unskilled agricultural laborers, and hence it is not surprising that, judged by this literal criterion, there are few or no survivals of “capitalist” stratification. In some other sense this is by no means so obvious, and the failure to deal adequately with those other possibilities is one of the flaws of the book (which was to have been filled, perhaps, by the projected study of social change, for which the prospects of completion and publication must now alas be slim.)

In saying this, I have no wish to challenge the author's expressed conviction that yearning for “capitalism” is rare and a survival rather than “a phenomenon connected with

contemporary structure.” This is what I have in mind: given the stress on qualifications, complexity of work, and cultural level as determinants of stratification, one naturally wonders about the role of past wealth as a correlate of educational opportunity or aspiration. (There are reasons for suspecting that working-class entry into higher education suffered from egalitarianism, by diminishing financial incentives for undergoing it, and thus encouraging the self-recruitment of those oriented toward it as an end in itself.) One would also like to know the long-term consequences of the erstwhile favoring of working-class candidates, and the discouragement of “bourgeois” ones, unless they and their fathers enthusiastically overcompensated for their background. The regime had previously used educational opportunity as a means of social control, withdrawing access to education from the offspring of those failing to display conspicuous conformity. Even lukewarmness of the fathers was visited upon the children. I suspect that the effects of this policy were relatively small, in the long run—those who wanted education in the end obtained it. (This of course in no way excuses these repellent measures nor does it hold much consolation for those who had to suffer from them, least of all for those who never recovered. All the same, it would be interesting to know just how effective, or possibly how counterproductive, such persecution was.)

In addition to excluding any significant survival of “capitalist stratification,” the author also, and similarly, excludes the applicability or survival of the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” He observes that, on the contrary, the unfavorable traits of the political system affected above all the workers, the most numerous segment of the population.

The author *does* attribute a good deal of relevance to the “bureaucratic” type of stratification. The main evidence for (or meaning of) this contention is indeed the sharp dif-

ferentiation in the distribution of power, in such marked contrast to the absence of great inequalities in other spheres. At the same time, he firmly asserts that his material refutes the contention that power is the crucial principle of differentiation in all "socialist" societies—whether such an assertion is made by way of hostile criticism or in the spirit of a romanticized endorsement of "revolutionary violence."

Without wishing, like the apologists of bureaucracy, to underrate the importance of the sphere of political power, we must respect the facts which prove that in Czechoslovakia as of November 1967, power was not altogether the axis or basic skeleton of social differentiation and social life, but rather a kind of external form, in part adapting itself to, and in part obstructing, another type of social differentiation. It is hard to speak of the "theory of the new class" as a power elite with all the other attributes of a top stratum . . . even though the research could not have seized its possible inner center. But it showed that around this center—if it existed at all—there was no larger group of power-potentates, with privileges but without the required education and expertise.

The author proceeds to tell us that the egalitarian type of stratification was also found to be important, notably in producing the narrow span of income and some degree of incongruence between the standard of living on the one hand, and the educational level, complexity of work, and leisure styles on the other. He also considers the "technocratic" (or "culturocratic") stratification to be relevant, notably as an imminent danger. By this he means a replacement of the current bureaucracy by one that is selected for technical competence, but a replacement *not* accompanied by democratization (which seems to mean greater genuine participation through pluralism and liberalization).

But his final conclusion—an encouraging one from his viewpoint—is that a "socialist"

(in his sense) type of stratification is asserting itself, despite its inadequate influence on distribution (too egalitarian) and the power-political realm (too *inegalitarian*). It was also in conflict with *inequality* arising from economic backwardness (the backwardness of rural areas, agriculture, of Slovakia, and the underprivileged position of the economically inactive and of women).

So, if the author is right, the liberalization movement of the 1960s saw itself in a midwife role—assisting in the birth of a social form that was *in any case* emerging:

A realistic socialism is beginning to emerge with us as a socially just form (i.e., one that has removed capitalist inequality and displays no tendency to return to it) of an industrial achievement society, a richly differentiated and stratified one, though not too sharply—and hence differentiated in terms of interests and viewpoints. A realistic conception of socialism, respecting this differentiation of interests (and hence the existence of tensions and possibly their accentuation) has begun to gain recognition with us and in other socialist countries in the '60s. . . .

All in all, what characterized the Czechoslovakia of 1967 was the tension between bureaucratic-egalitarian relations on the one hand, and socialist ones on the other. Technocratic relations represented a kind of middle point between the two extremes (approximating socialism by its stress on qualifications, and resembling bureaucracy by its lack of democracy). This tension was made possible by the existence of "traditional" inequalities springing from the inadequate industrial development of the country.

Bureaucratic-egalitarian social relations were demonstrably the main brake on the further development of industrial culture. . . . The Czechoslovakia of the early '50s and early '60s was proof of the futility of considering whether it is possible upon the present social foundations to replace material incentives by others, such as moral ones. It also refutes the efforts . . . to prove that the socialist type of society can replace . . . the differentiation of rewards by the

force of organizations, administration, and power.

The application of the principle of achievement, which was implemented in its technocratic form . . . was incomplete and limited. Reforms imposed from above (e.g., deleveling, general economic reform, application of criteria of competence in appointments) were cast in an administrative form that hampered initiative . . . and any real achievement. Without democracy, technocratic reforms failed to achieve their ends and became sterile through the endless struggle with the ubiquitous bureaucracy.

The author then discusses those who were interested in either opposing or supporting reforms that might overcome these brakes on development and the whole "bureaucratic-egalitarian" system. Those opposing the changes were the carriers of the "past of the revolution . . . unable to understand the transition to the positive construction of socialism." There was the relatively influential group of bureaucrats, based on power positions, and a more numerous and more dynamic group of technocrats. There was also the group of unqualified but well-paid workers, who might have an interest in maintaining the "egalitarian" system.

For the other side of the conflict, the author claims the interests of the "broadest masses." He goes on to note that these conflicts of interest—who could not be articulated fully in an exchange of views and in political activity in 1967—were producing a latent tension of critical dimensions. The "bureaucratic-egalitarian social relations" were thus opposed by a powerful coalition of social forces.

The final and equally fascinating section of Machonin's crucial chapter is concerned with the origins of this situation.

The Czechoslovak revolution of 1945–48 [i.e., the Communist takeover] resulted from the confluence of two currents: one socialist, the other egalitarian. The socialist reconstruction of society needed the political support of the masses: this it gained above all by concessions to the egalitarian sentiments,

which in our sociocultural community find support in centuries-old objective and subjective traditions. . . . Whereas national democracy was not thoroughly implemented after February 1948, and on the contrary the '50s saw . . . a good measure of bureaucratism, egalitarian ideas were for this very reason further implemented. Otherwise the regime, which did not continue to implement the democratic program, could not have gained the minimal support for . . . the real or supposed class struggle. The extensive [i.e., a nonintensive] industrial development . . . corresponded to this social trend. . . .

Almost simultaneously with the declared completion of socialization, the protracted economic-cultural crisis of the '60s broke out, caused by the inability of the bureaucratic-egalitarian system to satisfy the elementary cultural needs of society (this was manifested by the stagnation and partial decline of production), and even less to stimulate further progress . . . after the inner resources of extensive industrialization were exhausted.

The author refers to the "trial run" reforms of the 1956–58 period, inspired by the 20th Congress of the CPSU, yet without either identifying them or explaining their lack of immediate impact. But they were followed up in the '60s (a later paragraph says "from the first half of the '60s") by the reform movement. He lists its ideas: economic reform; intensification of the economy (i.e., as opposed to mere "extensive" expansion of production, which had operated simply by recruiting rural workers and women into industry); the speedup of the move toward the so-called scientific-technological revolution; the overcoming of the notion of class war as the main motive force of inner development; a critique of egalitarianism and bureaucratism; the evolution of socialist democracy including national equality; and humanism.

The author attributes importance to the fact that the regime of the Socialist Czechoslovak Republic was born of a genuinely democratic and socialist revolution, that its

bureaucratization was carried out as it were “behind its back,” and was contrary to the intentions of the major part of its creators. Hence, there were many who had not forgotten the “original sense of socialism” and found the social crisis hard to bear, seeing it subjectively as the result of “deformations.” Here the author’s own explanation does not really go much beyond what he himself describes as the “subjective” perception of the situation. Contemplating the horror of the ’50s, he says in effect—we were betrayed, we had not willed *this*.

Insofar as there is a diagnosis of the “deformations,” it is the inverse of the one conventionally current in the West, which sees Stalinist inequality as the price of a rapid and ruthless industrialization. Machonin (though he stresses the industrial backwardness of Czechoslovakia by the standards of today) in effect says: just because the country was *already* industrial, it could use egalitarianism to compensate for the *other* deformations and buy off popular discontent in some measure, and postpone through “extensive” expansion that stagnation which, in the end, was the inescapable penalty of the “egalitarian-bureaucratic” syndrome.

Even the power elite, he goes on to observe, did not remain untouched by the movement described—especially some of its segments. Others adjusted to it, sometimes hesitantly. And the bureaucratic segment opposed it.

The ’60s did not achieve an intensification of production, though many other preconditions were then achieved. These trends became stronger during the second half of the ’60s and reached their height by attaining the first steps of an income deleveling, and by some manifestations of a “changed consciousness” on the part of the “active segments of society.” Deleveling and consciousness—an interesting pair drawn, I suppose, from functionalism and Marxism respectively—are the book’s main themes. And Machonin goes on to add, with great passion:

Those ordinary, despised, derided, yes hated ’60s, in which we often see only the unsavory banality of a criticized regime, the stagnation of the economy and the standard of living, in reality gradually brought about a mass of deep cultural changes, which could not but express themselves in a differentiation of men, work and life-styles . . . which partially weakened but did not overcome egalitarianism, and undermined the bureaucratic-autocratic aspects of direction Well—this is the social condition seized upon by our research in November 1967. The empirically indicated direction of our evolution did not surprise us, for all in all we expected it. What did surprise us was how far the evolution had already progressed. The findings can only be understood from a dynamic viewpoint.

In other words, they reflect a powerful, and perhaps an irresistible trend, and one which, for this author, plainly is an object not only of investigation but also of love.

In the West, many of us find it possible to be both pluralists and egalitarians (though admittedly we do not give it much profound thought, for the danger of the implementation of equality is so small as to make its compatibility with liberty a less than pressing problem). We assume that political plurality and opposition can arise on any basis—even sheer unaided competition for power or rivalry of ideas—and that consequently we are not obliged to create or demonstrate the existence of social diversity in order to underpin plurality. We have diversity anyway, but we do not feel we need it specifically for the purpose of political pluralism. We assume that plurality is self-generating, unless forcibly suppressed. Are we too complacent? In any case, Machonin and his colleagues evidently live in a world that does not encourage such complacency. They seem more sure of their local stratification than they are of pluralism, which they see as its alleged or desired political expression, and they clearly wish to use their documentation of the

former as an encouragement of the emergence of the latter.

The nexus between the stratification they document and welcome and the pluralism they desire is of the greatest importance, but the details of this connection are left a little obscure. Is it that here the authors are clear and unambiguous Marxists, in a straightforward and specific sense, and believe that unless you have classes and opposition, you cannot have political plurality? This would admittedly be out of tune with their opposition to the old cult of the class struggle, but it would also constitute an interesting back-to-front use of the erstwhile Communist orthodoxy, which maintained that just because classes were in the process of abolition, there was no further need for a multiplicity of political parties. Or do we find signs here of a residue of political caution, concerning the extent of political plurality which is to be encouraged (e.g., was it to be only internal to the Party, rather than multiplying effective parties?) in which case publicly acknowledged stratification, with a recognized right of self-expression, would be a *substitute*, in some measure, for complete political freedom? This would be an interesting version of neo-corporatism in a Marxist guise. Or were both these arguments present? Most probably, the authors had not entirely made up

their minds. In any case, the book is not explicit enough about the nature of that nexus between stratification and pluralism which is so central to it.

It is possible to make some general criticisms. For instance: the theoretical discussion really goes far beyond the modesty of the title of the book—which claims to be concerned only with *Czechoslovak* society—and appears to get close to a theory of industrial-socialist stratification as such. But is this extrapolation justifiable? The authors themselves note that there are important differences between Czechoslovakia and the other European Communist countries. Is it not possible that their research, and the theory surrounding it, treats not socialist stratification as such and its options but rather its impact on a very specific historic tradition?

More important perhaps is what might be called the implicit sociology of the authors. (Or is it a residue of simplistic Marxism?) In brief, they underrate politics and power, or at least their analysis seems to do so. They place their trust in basic social trends. The impacts of mere power upon it are classified as *deformations*. Deformations are most regrettable, but one fears the touch of complacency in the hint that in the long run, deformations cannot stand up to the “real” social structure. Or was it not so much complacency as a reluctance to think too hard about aspects of the recent past that were best forgotten, a reluctance expressed in an eager willingness to confine them to the area of the socially ephemeral? But one might fear that if the prerevolutionary history of mankind is the story of the forms of alienation, then postrevolutionary history is the story of the varieties of “deformation.” The deformations may be more important than the alleged substrate. One finds no satisfaction at all in the thought that, if the authors were indeed inclined to ignore this possibility, there is nothing in their present condition to encourage them to persist in this error.

disSENT

HAVE YOU MOVED?

Send both old and new address to
DISSENT: 509 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

*Allow three weeks
for change to become effective*

In stressing the need of a stratificational base for political plurality and hence freedom, the authors may be more realistic than the starry-eyed Western progressive, who thinks he can without strain love both liberty and equality. They can certainly cite Tocqueville as well as Marx in support of their fears. Machonin invokes Marx's analysis of Bonapartism, as basing its tyranny on the equality of smallholders, in his analysis of the pre-1968 dictatorship-with-equality in Czechoslovakia. One should also mention L. Brokl's chapter in the book, which deals with power. This is one of the most interesting parts of the book, not merely because of the inherent fascination of its topic, but also because of its struggles with the methodological problems of perceiving power, and the author's quite exceptionally frank use of "Western" sociology and disregard for Marxism.

Thus the book as a whole contains both the philosophy and the sociology of liberalization. Philosophy provides the major premise, which is of a "historicist" kind, i.e., an appeal to strong, perhaps irreversible trends. It is in the light of this principle that the author defines "socialism," trying to capture the appeal of this word both for his values and his interpretation of current social trends, and observing that there is no point in "inventing" one's socialism: one must de-

duce it from real social tendencies. These real trends reveal a diversified, achievement-oriented industrial society, and a pluralistic one. And that is the minor premise. Unfortunately the full emergence of these trends is hampered by the egalitarian-bureaucratic system—egalitarian in order to hide its lack of political democracy, egalitarian economically but *inegalitarian* politically—which is at the same time incapable of making the society function, economically and otherwise. Thus we have, once again, a midwifery kind of social philosophy.

This is quite unlike the ideas of those reformers who seek inspiration or vindication in the young Marx. The philosophical premise drawn from Marx in this scheme is of the *hard*, historical-necessity-recognizing strand in his thought, and not from the recently popular soft center of his youth. But it is made revolutionary in its context by the addition of the empirical minor premise, and this is indebted to the Western theory of "industrial society" and to Western research techniques. Interestingly, this social research concentrated less on the abuses of the old regime than on the force of the tendencies that brought about the rebirth—tendencies which, the authors claim, legitimate themselves by their very strength and their deep social roots.

□

Edward and Onora Nell

On Justice under Socialism

"From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

The stirring slogan that ends *The Critique of the Gotha Program* is generally taken as a capsule summary of the socialist approach to distributing the burdens and benefits of life. It can be seen as the statement of a noble ideal and yet be found wanting on three separate scores. First, there is no guarantee that, even if all contribute according to their abilities, all needs can be met: the principle gives us no guidance for distributing goods when some needs must go unmet. Second, if all contribute according to their abilities, there may be a material surplus after all needs are met: again, the principle gives us no guidance for distributing such a surplus. Third, the principle incorporates no suggestion as to why each man would contribute according to his ability: no incentive structure is evident.

These apparent shortcomings can be compared with those of other principles a society might follow in distributing burdens and benefits. Let us call

1. "From each according to his ability to each according to his need," the *Socialist Principle of Justice*. Its Capitalist counterpart would be

2. From each according to his choice, given his assets, to each according to his contribution. We shall call this the *Laissez-Faire Principle*.

These two principles will require a good deal of interpretation, but at the outset we

can say that in the Socialist Principle of Justice "abilities" and "needs" refer to persons, whereas the "choices" and "contributions" in the Laissez-Faire Principle refer also to the management of impersonal property, the given assets. It goes without saying that some of the "choices," particularly those of the propertyless, are normally made under considerable duress. As "choice" is the ideologically favored term, we shall retain it.

In a society where the Socialist Principle of Justice regulates distribution, the requirement is that everyone use such talents as have been developed in him (though this need not entail any allocation of workers to jobs), and the payment of workers is contingent not upon their contributions but upon their needs. In a laissez-faire society, where individuals may be endowed with more or less capital or with bare labor power, they choose in the light of these assets how and how much to work (they may be drop-outs or moonlighters), and/or how to invest their capital, and they are paid in proportion.

None of the three objections raised against the Socialist Principle of Justice holds for the Laissez-Faire Principle. Whatever the level of contribution individuals choose, their aggregate product can be distributed in proportion to the contribution—whether of capital or of labor—each individual chooses to make. The Laissez-Faire Principle is ap-

plicable under situations both of scarcity and of abundance, and it incorporates a theory of incentives: people choose their level of contribution in order to get a given level of material reward.

Principles 1 and 2 can be cross-fertilized, yielding two further principles:

3. From each according to his ability, to each according to his contribution.

4. From each according to his choice, to each according to his need.

Principle 3 could be called an *Incentive Socialist Principle* of distribution. Like the Socialist Principle of Justice, it pictures a society in which all are required to work in proportion to the talents that have been developed in them. Since unearned income is not available and rewards are hinged to contribution rather than need, all work is easily enforced in an economy based on the Incentive Socialist Principle. This principle, however, covers a considerable range of systems. It holds for a Stalinist economy with an authoritarian job allocation. It also holds for a more liberal, market socialist economy in which there is a more or less free labor market, though without an option to drop out or live on unearned income, or the freedom to choose the level and type of qualification one is prepared to acquire. The Incentive Socialist Principle rewards workers according to their contribution: it is a principle of distribution in which an incentive system—reliance on material rewards—is explicit. Marx believed this principle would have to be followed in the early stages of socialism, in a society “still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society.”

Under the Incentive Socialist Principle, each worker receives back the value of the amount of work he contributes to society in one form or another. According to Marx, this is a form of bourgeois right that “tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowments, and thus natural privileges in respect of productive capacity.” So this principle holds for a still deficient society where the needs of

particular workers, which depend on many things other than their productive capacity, may not be met. Although it may be less desirable than the Socialist Principle of Justice, the Incentive Socialist Principle clearly meets certain criteria the Socialist Principle of Justice cannot meet. It provides a principle of allocation that can be applied equally well to the various situations of scarcity, sufficiency, and abundance. Its material incentive structure explains how under market socialism, given a capital structure and a skill structure, workers will choose jobs and work hard at them—and also why under a Stalinist economy workers will work hard at jobs to which they have been allocated.

Under the Incentive Socialist Principle, workers—whether assigned to menial work or to specific jobs—respond to incentives of the same sort as do workers under the Laissez-Faire Principle. The difference is that, while the Laissez-Faire Principle leaves the measurement of the contribution of a worker to be determined by the level of wage he is offered, the Incentive Socialist Principle relies on a bureaucratically determined weighting that takes into account such factors as the difficulty, duration, qualification level, and risk involved in a given job.

There is another difference between societies living under the Laissez-Faire Principle and those following the Incentive Socialist Principle. Under the Laissez-Faire Principle, there is no central coordination of decisions, for assets are managed according to the choices of their owners. This gives rise to the well-known problems of instability and unemployment. Under the Incentive Socialist Principle, assets are managed by the central government; hence one would expect instability to be eliminated and full employment guaranteed. However, we do not regard this difference as a matter of principle on the same level with others we are discussing. Moreover, in practice some recognizable capitalist societies have managed to control fluctuations without under-

mining the Laissez-Faire Principle as the principle of distribution.

Let us call Principle 4 the *Utopian Principle of Justice*. It postulates a society without any requirement of contribution or material incentives, but with guaranteed minimal consumption. This principle suffers from the same defect as the Socialist Principle of Justice: it does not determine distributions of benefits under conditions either of scarcity or of abundance, and it suggests no incentive structure to explain why enough should be contributed to its economy to make it possible to satisfy needs. Whether labor is contributed according to choice or according to ability, it is conceivable that the aggregate social product should be such that either some needs cannot be met or that, when all needs are met, a surplus remains that cannot be divided on the basis of needs.

On the surface, this Utopian Principle of Justice exudes the aroma of laissez-faire: though needs will not go unmet in utopia, contributions will be made for no more basic reason than individual whim. They are tied neither to the reliable effects of the incentive of material reward for oneself, nor to those of the noble ideal of filling the needs of others, nor to a conception of duty or self-sacrifice. Instead, contributions will come forth, if they do, according to the free and unconstrained choices of individual economic agents, on the basis of their given preferences. Preferences, however, are not "given"; they develop and change, are learned and unlearned, and follow fashions and fads. Whim, fancy, pleasure, desire, wish are all words suggesting this aspect of consumer choice. By tying the demand for products to needs and the supply of work to choice, the Utopian Principle of Justice ensures stability in the former but does not legislate against fluctuations and unpredictable variability in the latter.

So the Socialist Principle of Justice and the Utopian Principle of Justice suffer from a common defect. There is no reason to suppose these systems will operate at precisely

the level at which aggregate output is sufficient to meet all needs without surplus. And since people do not need an income in money terms but rather an actual and quite precisely defined list of food, clothing, housing, etc. (bearing in mind the various alternatives that might be substituted), the *aggregate* measured in value terms could be right, yet the *composition* might still be unable to meet all the people's needs. People might choose or have the ability to do the right amount of work, but on the wrong projects. One could even imagine the economy growing from a situation of scarcity to one of abundance without ever passing through any point at which its aggregate output could be distributed to meet precisely the needs of its population.

So far, we have been considering not the justification or desirability of alternative principles of distribution, but their practicality. It appears that, in this respect, principles hinging reward on contribution rather than on need have a great advantage. They can both provide a general principle of distribution and indicate the pattern of incentives to which workers will respond.

It might be held that these advantages are restricted to the Incentive Socialist Principle in its various versions, since under the Laissez-Faire Principle there is some income—property income—which is not being paid in virtue of any contribution. This problem can be dealt with either, as we indicated above, by interpreting the notion of contribution to cover the contribution of one's assets to the capital market, or by restricting the scope of the Laissez-Faire Principle to cover workers only, or by interpreting the notion of property income so as to regard wages as a return to property, i.e., property in one's labor power. One can say that under capitalism part of the aggregate product is set aside for the owners of capital (and another part, as under market socialism, for government expenditure) and the remainder is distributed according to the Laissez-Faire Principle. Or one may say that property in-

come is paid in virtue of past contributions, whose reward was not consumed at the time it was earned but was stored. Apologists tend to favor interpretations that make the worker a sort of capitalist or the capitalist a sort of slow-consuming worker. Whichever line is taken, it is clear that the Laissez-Faire Principle—however undesirable we may find it—is a principle of distribution that can be of general use in two senses. Appropriately interpreted, it covers the distribution of earned and of unearned income, and it applies in situations both of scarcity and of abundance.

So we seem to have reached the paradoxical conclusion that the principle of distribution requiring that workers' needs be met is of no use in situations of need, since it does not assign priorities among needs, and that the principle demanding that each contribute according to his ability is unable to explain what incentives will lead him to do so. In this view, the Socialist Principle of Justice would have to be regarded as possibly noble but certainly unworkable.

But this view should not be accepted. **II** Marx formulated the Socialist Principle of Justice on the basis of a conception of human abilities and needs that will yield some guidance to its interpretation. We shall now try to see whether the difficulties discussed above can be alleviated when we consider this principle in the light of Marxian theory.

Marx clearly thought that the Socialist Principle of Justice was peculiarly relevant to situations of abundance. In the last section we argued that, on the contrary, it was an adequate principle of distribution only when aggregate output exactly covered total needs. The source of this discrepancy lies in differing analyses of human needs.

By fulfillment of needs we understood at least a subsistence income. Needs are not met when a person lacks sufficient food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or socially necessary training/education. But beyond

this biological and social minimum we can point to another set of needs, which men do not have *qua* men but acquire *qua* producers. Workers need not merely a biological and social minimum, but whatever other goods—be they holidays or contacts with others whose work bears on theirs or guaranteed leisure, which they need to perform their jobs as well as possible. So a principle of distribution according to needs will not be of use only to a subsistence-level economy. Very considerable goods over and above those necessary for biological subsistence can be distributed according to a principle of need.

But despite this extension of the concept of need the Socialist Principle of Justice still seems to face the three problems listed in Section I:

(1) What guarantees are there that even under abundance the *composition* of the output, with all contributing according to their abilities, will suffice to fill all needs? (There may still be scarcities of goods needed to fill either biological or job-related needs.)

(2) What principle can serve to distribute goods that are surplus both to biological and to job-related needs?

(3) What system of incentives explains why each will contribute to the full measure of his abilities, though he is not materially rewarded for increments of effort? Whether or not there is authoritative job allocation, job performance cannot be guaranteed.

Marx's solution to these problems does not seem too explicit. But much is suggested by the passage at the end of the *Critique of the Gotha Program* where he describes the higher phase of communist society as one in which "labor is no longer merely a means of life but has become life's principal need."

To most people it sounds almost comic to claim that labor could become life's principal need: it suggests a society of compulsive workers. Labor in the common view is intrinsically undesirable, but undertaken as a means to some further, typically material,

end. For Marx this popular view would have been confirmation of his own view of the degree to which most labor under capitalism is alienating. He thought that under capitalism laborers experienced a threefold alienation: alienation from the *product* of their labor, which is for them merely a means to material reward; alienation from the *process* of labor, which is experienced as forced labor rather than as desirable activity; and alienation from *others*, since activities undertaken with others are undertaken as a means to achieving further ends, which are normally scarce and allocated competitively. Laborers cooperate in production but, under capitalism, compete for job and income, and the competition overrides the cooperation. Hence Marx claims (in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*) that "life itself appears only as a means to life." Though the horror of that situation is apparent in the very words, many people accept that labor should be only a means to life—whose real ends lie elsewhere; whether in religion, consumption, personal relations, or leisure.

Marx, on the other hand, held that labor could be more than a means; it could also be an end of life, for labor in itself—the *activity*—can, like other activities, be something for whose sake one does other things. We would be loath to think that activity itself should appear only as a means to life—on the contrary, life's worth for most people lies in the activities undertaken. Those we call labor do not differ intrinsically from the rest, only in relation to the system of production. In Marx's view a system was possible in which all activities undertaken would be nonalienating. Nobody would have to compete to engage in an activity he found unpleasant for the sake of a material reward. Instead, workers would cooperate in creative and fulfilling activities that provide occasions for the exercise of talents, for taking responsibilities, and that result in useful or beautiful products. In such a situation one can see why labor would be regarded as life's greatest need, rather than as its

scourge. Nonalienated labor is humanly fulfilling activity.

IN THE COURSE of switching from the conception of alienating labor to that of non-alienating labor, it might seem that we have moved into a realm for which principles of distribution may be irrelevant. What can the Socialist Principle of Justice tell us about the distribution of burdens and benefits in "the higher phase of communist society"?

In such a society each is to contribute according to his abilities. In the light of the discussion of nonalienated labor, it is clear that there is no problem of incentives. Each man works at what he wants to work at. He works because that is his need. (This is not a situation in which "moral incentives" have replaced material ones, for both moral and material incentives are based on alienating labor. The situation Marx envisages is one for which incentives of *all* sorts are irrelevant.)

Though this disposes of the problem of incentives under the Socialist Principle of Justice, it is much less clear whether this principle can work for a reasonable range of situations. Can it cope with both the situation of abundance and that of scarcity?

In the case of abundance, a surplus of goods over and above those needed is provided. But if all activities are need-fulfilling, then no work is done that does not fulfill some need. In a sense there is no surplus to be distributed, for nothing needless is being done. Nevertheless, there may be a surplus of material goods that are the by-product of need-fulfilling activity. In a society where everybody fulfills himself by painting pictures, there may be a vast surplus of pictures. If so, the Socialist Principle of Justice gives no indication of the right method for their distribution; they are not the goal for which the task was undertaken. Since they do not fulfill an objective need, the method for their distribution is not important. In this the higher phase of communist society is, as one might expect, the very antithesis

of consumerism; rather than fabricate reasons for desiring and so acquiring what is not needed, it disregards anything that is not needed in decisions of distribution.

There, nevertheless, is a problem of distribution the Socialist Principle of Justice does not attempt to solve. Some of the products of need-fulfilling activity may be things other people either desire or detest. When need-fulfilling activity yields works of art or noisy block parties, its distribution cannot be disregarded. Not all planning problems can be solved by the Socialist Principle of Justice. We shall not discuss the merits of various principles that could serve to handle these cases, but shall only try to delimit the scope of the Socialist Principle of Justice.

This brings us to the problem of scarcity. Can the Socialist Principle of Justice explain why, when all contribute to the extent of their abilities, all needs can be met? Isn't it conceivable that everyone should find fulfillment in painting, but nobody find fulfillment in producing either biological necessities or the canvases, brushes, and paints everybody wants to use? Might not incentive payments be needed, even in this higher phase of communist society, to guarantee the production of subsistence goods and job-related necessities? In short, will not any viable system involve some alienating labor?

Marx at any rate guarantees that communism need not involve much alienating labor. He insists that the Socialist Principle of Justice is applicable only in a context of abundance. For only when man's needs can be met is it relevant to insist that they ought to be met. The Socialist Principle of Justice comes into its own only with the development of the forces of production. But, of course, higher productivity does not by itself guarantee the right composition of output. Subsistence goods and job-related services and products might not be provided as the population fulfills itself in painting, poetry, and sculpture. Man cannot live by works of art alone.

This socialist version of the story of

Midas should not alarm us too much. The possibility of starvation amidst abundant art works seemed plausible only because we abstracted it from other features of an abundant socialist society. Such a society is a planned society, and part of its planning concerns the ability structure of the population. Such a society would include people able to perform all tasks necessary to maintain a high level of material well-being.

Nevertheless, there may be certain essential tasks in such a society whose performance is not need-fulfilling for anybody. Their allocation presents another planning problem for which the Socialist Principle of Justice, by hypothesis, is not a solution. But the degree of coercion need not be very great. In a highly productive society the amount of labor expended on nonfulfilling tasks is a diminishing proportion of total labor time. Hence, given equitable allocation of this burden (and it is here that the planning decisions are really made), nobody would be prevented from engaging principally in need-fulfilling activities. In the limiting case of abundance, where automation of the production of material needs is complete, nobody would have to do any task he did not find intrinsically worthwhile. To the extent that this abundance is not reached, the Socialist Principle of Justice cannot be fully implemented.

However, the degree of coercion, experienced by those who are allocated to necessary but nonfulfilling chores, may be reducible if the planning procedure is of a certain sort. To the extent that people participate in planning and that they realize the necessity of the nonfulfilling chores in order for everyone to be able to do also what he finds need-fulfilling, they may find the performance of these chores less burdensome. As they want to achieve the ends, so—once they are informed—they cannot rationally resent the means, provided they perceive the distribution of chores as just.

The point can be taken a step further. Under the Socialist Principle of Justice,

households do not put forth productive effort to be rewarded with an aliquot portion of time and means for self-fulfillment. It is precisely this market mentality from which we wish to escape. The miserable toil of society should be

performed gratis for the benefit of society . . . performed not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed quotas, but voluntary labor . . . performed because it has become a habit to work for the common good, and because of a conscious realization (that has become a habit) of the necessity of working for the common good. [V. I. Lenin, "From the Destruction of the Old Social System to the Creation of the New," April 11, 1920. From *Collected Works*, English trans., 40 vols. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965), vol. 30, p. 517.]

Creative work should be done for its own sake, not for any reward. Drudgery should be done for the common good, not in order to be rewarded with opportunity and means for creative work. Of course, the better and more efficient the performance of drudgery, the more will be the opportunities for creative work. To realize this, however, is to understand the necessity of working for the common good, not to be animated by private material incentives. For the possibilities of creative work are opened by the simultaneous and parallel development of large numbers of people. To take the arts, poets need a public, authors readers, performers audiences, and all need (though few want) critics. One cannot sensibly wish, under the Socialist Principle of Justice, to be rewarded *privately* with opportunities and means for nonalienated work.

There is a question regarding the distribution of educational opportunities. Before men can contribute according to their abilities, their abilities must be developed. But in whom should society develop which abilities? If we regard education as consumption, then according to the Socialist Principle of

Justice, each should receive it according to his need.

It is clear that all men require some early training to make them viable social beings; further, all men require certain general skills necessary for performing work. But we could hardly claim that some men need to be doctors or economists or lawyers, or need to receive any other specialized or expensive training. If, on the other hand, we regard education as production of those skills necessary for maintaining society and providing the possibility of fulfillment, then the Socialist Principle of Justice can determine a lower bound to the production of certain skills: so-and-so many farmers/doctors/mechanics must be produced to satisfy future subsistence and job-related needs. But the Socialist Principle of Justice cannot determine who shall get which of these educational opportunities. One traditional answer might be that each person should specialize at whatever he is relatively best suited to do. Yet this only makes sense in terms of tasks done as onerous means to desirable ends. Specialization on the basis of comparative advantage minimizes the effort in achieving given ends; but if work is itself fulfilling, it is not an "effort" that must be minimized.

In conditions of abundance, it is unlikely that anyone will be denied training they want and can absorb, though they may have to acquire skills they do not particularly want, since some onerous tasks may still have to be done. For even in conditions of abundance, it may be necessary to compel some or all to undertake certain unwanted training in the interests of the whole. But it is not necessary to supplement the Socialist Principle of Justice with an incentive scheme, whether material or moral. The principle already contains the Kantian maxim: develop your talents to the utmost, for only in this way can a person contribute to the limits of his ability. And if a society wills the end of self-fulfillment, it must will sufficient means. If the members of society take part in plan-

ning to maintain and expand the opportunities for everyone's nonalienated activity, they must understand the necessity of allocating the onerous tasks, and so the training for them.

III
Perhaps we can make our point clearer by looking briefly at Marx's schematic conception of the stages of modern history—feudalism, capitalism, socialism, communism—where each stage is characterized by a higher productivity of labor than the preceding stage. In feudalism, the principle of distribution would be:

5. From each according to his status, to each according to his status—the *Feudal Principle of Justice*.

There is no connexion between work and reward. There are no market incentives in the "ideal" feudal system. Peasants grow the stuff for their own subsistence and perform traditional labor services for their lord on domain land. He in turn provides protection and government in traditional fashion. Yet, though labor is not performed as a means to a distant or abstract end, as when it is done for money, it still is done for survival, not for its own sake, and those who do it are powerless to control their conditions of work or their own destinies. Man lives on the edge of famine and is subject to the vagaries of the weather and the dominion of tradition. Only a massive increase in productive powers frees him. But to engender this increase men must come to connect work directly with reward. This provides the incentive to labor, both to take those jobs most needed (moving from the farm to the factory) and to work sufficiently hard once on the job.

But more than work is needed; the surplus of output over that needed to maintain the work force (including managers) and replace and repair the means of production (machines, raw materials) must be put to productive use; it must be reinvested, not consumed. In capitalism, station at birth de-

termines whether one works or owns capital; workers are rewarded for their contribution of work, capitalists for theirs of reinvestment. There is a stick as well as a carrot. Those workers who do not work, starve; those capitalists who fail to reinvest, fail to grow and will eventually be crushed by their larger rivals. Socialism rationalizes this by eliminating the two-class dichotomy and by making reinvestment a function of the institutions of the state, so that the capital structure of the society is the collective property of the citizenry, all of whom must work for reward. In this system the connexion between work and reward reaches its fullest development, and labor in one sense is most fully alienated. The transition to communism then breaks this link altogether.

The link between work and rewards serves a historical purpose, namely to encourage the development of the productive forces. But as the productive forces continue to develop, the demand for additional rewards will tend to decline, while the difficulty of stimulating still further growth in productivity may increase. This, at least, seems to be implied by the principles of conventional economics—diminishing marginal utility and diminishing marginal productivity. Even if one rejects most of the conventional wisdom of economics, a good case can be made for the diminishing efficacy of material incentives as prosperity increases. For as labor productivity rises, private consumption needs will be met, and the most urgent needs remaining will be those requiring *collective* consumption—and, indeed, some of these needs will be generated by the process of growth and technical progress. These last needs, if left unmet, may hinder further attempts to raise the productive power of labor. So the system of material incentives could in principle come to a point where the weakened encouragements to extra productivity offered as private reward for contribution might be offset by the accumulated hindrances generated by the failures to meet

collective needs and by the wastes involved in competition. At this point, it becomes appropriate to break the link between work and reward. Breaking the link, however, is not enough. Both the Socialist Principle of Justice and the Utopian Principle of Justice break the link between work and reward. But the Utopian Principle of Justice leaves the distinction between them. Work is a means, the products of work are the ends. Given a high productivity of labor, workers would in principle choose their occupations and work-leisure patterns, yet still producing enough to satisfy everyone's needs. This would be a society devoted to minimizing effort, a sort of high-technology Polynesia. Since it neither makes consumption dependent upon work nor regards work as other than a regrettable means to consumption, it fails to explain why sufficient work to supply basic needs should ever be done. The alienation of labor cannot be overcome by eliminating labor rather than alienation.

Breaking the link between work and reward, while leaving the distinction itself intact, may also lead to the loss of the productive powers of labor. For without reward, and when the object is to work as little as possible, why expend the effort to acquire highly complex skills? What is the motive to education, self-improvement, self-development? A high-technology Polynesia contains an inner contradiction.

By contrast, the Socialist Principle of Justice not only does not make reward depend upon work but denies that there is a distinction between the two. Because man needs fulfilling activity—work that he

chooses and wants—men who get it contribute according to their ability.

Yet there still may remain routine and menial, unfulfilling jobs. But who wills the end wills the means. The society must plan to have such jobs done. No doubt, many will be mechanized or automated, but the remaining ones will form a burden that must be allocated.

The Socialist Principle of Justice cannot solve this problem of allocation. But everyone has some interest in getting uncoveted but essential work done. Hence it should not be difficult to find an acceptable supplementary principle of distribution for allocating these chores. For instance, the Principle of Comparative Advantage might be introduced to assign each the drudgery at which he is relatively best. There can be no quarrel with this so long as such alienating work is only a small fraction of a man's total activity, conferring no special status. It is only when alienating work takes up the bulk of one's waking hours, and determines status, that specialization inevitably entails some form of class structure.

The Socialist Principle of Justice cannot solve all allocation problems. But once one understands that it is based on a denial of a distinction between work, need, and reward, it is clear that it can solve an enormous range of such problems. In a highly productive society the only allocation problems the Socialist Principle of Justice cannot solve are the distribution of unmechanized and uncoveted chores and of the material by-products of creative endeavor. □

Michael Walzer

On Arabs and Jews

The Chimera of a Binational State

There are people in the world so crazy as not to realize that this is normal human existence of the kind everybody should aim at.

—NADEZHDA MANDELSTAM

From the beginning, Zionists aimed at a kind of normality, and political Zionists at a very particular kind. They sought the normality of statehood: a people on its own land, with its own institutions and its own police and army, freed from the dangers of exile and persecution (though not from the dangers of war). The political Zionists were like those elders of Israel who came to Samuel and said, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Theirs was not a utopian vision, though it was often expressed in prophetic language, and it was and is open to utopian criticism. Sometimes that criticism isn't very interesting. When the citizens of powerful states like our own disdain Jewish aspirations to statehood or suggest that Jews (especially) should seek nobler ends, they act like those upper-class radicals who are impatient with working-class materialism. It is not easy to respond to such people, though no elaborate argument is necessary. One should simply rehearse the recent history of the Jews, or try to indicate to them how their own security and dignity are intimately connected with the exercise of sovereignty in their name. There isn't anything else to say.

That is not the case with another, more

important critique of Zionism, rooted in Jewish experience but shaped largely by socialist ideology. When Marx wrote that the workers have no country, his words were false with reference to the workers, but they were an accurate description of most of the world's Jews. And countrylessness bred socialist internationalism, much as Marx thought it would, though the psychological mechanisms were more complicated than any he suggested. Jews have always been among the most fervent internationalists in the socialist and communist movements. With a special eagerness (which marked them out even when they felt closest to their gentile comrades), they looked toward the world Marx described in *The Communist Manifesto*, where "national differences and antagonisms between peoples are already tending to disappear more and more." Free from conventional political loyalties, they also freed themselves from any sense of Jewish identity and imagined that they already were the future citizens of the world socialist republic. They denied, in effect, what the Zionists had always insisted upon: that the case of the Jews was exceptional, that exile was abnormal.

Whatever the virtues of their position, Hitler settled the argument, at least temporarily,

against the Marxist critics of Zionism. He proved the exceptionalism of the Jews and established the need for a Jewish state, as a refuge, if for no other reason. After the Holocaust, statehood became an ethical imperative. Nor have events since that time made it any less important. Antagonisms between peoples are greater than they have ever been (for reasons I will try to suggest); there are as many ways as ever to be frightened and insecure; and the most radical and dangerous way is still to be countryless or stateless. Until the revolution is upon us, people will seek the protection of the nation-state, much as they will go to work week after week while waiting for the Messiah.

I am inclined to think that the argument remains settled. Yet the patent insecurity of the state of Israel, the emergence of a countryless Palestinian people, and the development in Western Europe and the United States of a New Left profoundly hostile to Zionism have clearly led to a reopening of the argument. It has been reopened, however, in a peculiarly parochial form. This is so for three reasons. First, it now focuses on a group of Jews reunited in a small corner of the world and no longer on a community dispersed throughout the world. Second, the Palestinians, far from describing themselves as universal men of the future, have developed a more or less straightforward nationalist position. And finally, the New Left has made its peace with virtually every nationalism in the world except that of the Jews. So it is not being argued these days that no one can be secure in a world of competing nation-states, but only that the security of Israel's Jews and the aspirations of the Palestinians are incompatible with the existence of Israel. The existence of Egypt and Syria, let alone of France and Germany, is not at issue. Indeed, there are times when it seems that the sum total of the new "internationalism" is binationalism in old Palestine. At any rate, this is the centerpiece of the contemporary leftist critique of Zionism, and its one, rather curious virtue is that its achievement neither

requires nor would contribute to a world revolution. So the Zionists have won this much at least: the Jewish question is at last recognized to be susceptible to a local solution.

The term "binationalism" does not single out a particular or coherent doctrine. There are at least three views of what the successor state to present-day Israel might look like, and they suggest very different ways of dealing with the nationalist feelings of Jews and Arabs. What they have in common is the formal repudiation of the nation-state, more particularly the Jewish nation-state, which is condemned for its exclusive, parochial, and discriminatory character. But it is hard to see how binationalism in any form can avoid having that same character, since there would necessarily be some third nationality with regard to which the binational state is exclusive, parochial, and discriminatory (in its immigration policy, for example, an abiding issue in the Middle East). First the various views must be set out in some order, roughly characterized at least, though I cannot attempt an analysis of the detailed positions of different political groups.

Because it figures in the programs of the Palestinian guerrillas, the "democratic secular state" is currently the most important, as it is the most mysterious, of the alternatives to Israeli statehood. The phrase suggests a set of arrangements whereby Jews and Arabs would share an equal citizenship under a unified sovereignty. But it does not provide, nor do those who use it, any specification of the precise character of the arrangements. What will be the official language of the new state? What history will be taught in its schools? What holidays will be celebrated? How will immigration policy be determined? If it is really to be democratic, such questions will presumably be settled by the majority; but given the nonexistence of the state, who will decide who is to be the majority? And what division of power will be worked out

with the (equally unknown) minority? Both Jews and Arabs, of course, regard Jewish or Arab statehood as perfectly compatible with democracy and secularism, and they are right to do so, at least in theory. But then how would a democratic secular state differ from either a Jewish or an Arab state?

It is a great deal easier to imagine a democratic secular state called Israel than one called Palestine: such a state already exists in substance (despite the power of Orthodox Jews) while Arab political culture offers little hope for anything like it in the near future. Now that the deracinated, frenchified, neo-Marxist elite of the FLN has produced a state so profoundly Arab and Islamic (and undemocratic) as contemporary Algeria, what is there to expect from al-Fatah? Indeed, the guerrillas have always been perfectly open about their own nationalism, even while insisting on their democratic and secularist commitments. Thus Article 1 of their National Covenant, endorsed by all the major groups: "Palestine is the homeland of the Palestinian Arab people and an integral part of the great Arab homeland, and the people of Palestine is a part of the Arab nation." Given the parallel and opposite commitments of virtually all Israeli Jews, it is hard to imagine a democratic secular state that did not begin with the departure of one or another of the two peoples. So Israel began, and so Palestine no doubt would begin, if the dreams of al-Fatah came true. "Jews who were living permanently in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians," according to Article 6 of the Covenant—which means that the great majority of Israeli Jews would not find a homeland in the new Palestine. The "democratic secular state" is clearly a false binationalism.

The second alternative is probably the only true binationalism. It would provide for separate and equal national institutions within a framework of state sovereignty. Religious, cultural, and social separatism would be permitted (whether on a territorial basis

or in some other way), economic cooperation encouraged, and political unity maintained. This is the proposal that I will be referring to most often in what follows, and yet as soon as one asks how political power might be apportioned in such a state and what this or that apportionment might mean, the problems of the second alternative begin to look rather like the problems of the first. It remains true, however, that the second is at least an honest and integral vision, the first only a rhetorical mask.

The third alternative is to give up any sort of unified sovereignty and opt for a federation of virtually autonomous "entities"—states, for all practical purposes, though advocates of binationalism think the term opprobrious. Here there are, so to speak, no problems at all, beyond those that have to be faced every day right now. That is, if one could draw the line between an Arab and a Jewish entity, few people would object to making it a dotted line and compromising in small or even in significant ways the absolute independence of the two political systems. Once a line is drawn and the right of the people on either side mutually recognized and guaranteed, all sorts of things would be possible. But the mere advocacy of federalism makes it no easier to draw the line. And sometimes that advocacy serves as a substitute for the politically necessary defense of the two entities and, above all, of Israel, the entity that already exists—which only makes it harder to draw the line.

THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE we must consider more closely. Since it involves the living together of peoples who have been at war for a quarter of a century, it may be useful to begin with a more general question. Why is it that national differences and antagonisms between peoples (not only between these two peoples) have not tended to disappear, as Marx thought they would? Surely it is not because of the failure of the Left; it is more likely because of its success. For what the Left has done, again and again—it ought

to be a source of pride—is to mobilize oppressed and passive people. And, again and again, these people have turned out to be nationalists, in the most elemental and powerful sense of that word. Indeed, it is the masses who are the carriers of nationalism. When they enter the historical arena, they come with their language, religion, age-old customs and, above all, their shared memories of oppression at the hands of foreigners. Unlike the upper classes even of subject nations, they have not been touched by the great imperial cultures of the prerevolutionary era—Hapsburg, Romanov, Ottoman, or British. They do not make their appearance, as many European Marxists expected them to do, as russified Poles, germanized Czechs, or Anglo-Indians. They appear as Polish, Czech, and Indian nationalists, and they can be effectively organized for political action only in movements and parties that promise national liberation.

The nationalism of the oppressed is one of the major discoveries of the modern age. It forces us to look again at the multinationalism of the old empires, probably the true historical source of the Marxist vision. Within those empires profoundly different peoples—Greek and Turk, Hindu and Muslim, Arab and Kurd, Ibo and Hausa—lived side by side in adjacent, even in the same villages and towns. They did not always live in peace: there were communal riots, pogroms, semi-official and spontaneous massacres—little enough, however, compared to all that has happened since. In all the new countries, there are old men—I have met both Jews and Arabs—who remember those days with a nostalgia I do not want to imitate. What made multinationalism possible was the oppressive rule of cosmopolitan and imperial elites, aliens within the communities they governed. The real crimes of imperialism were the work of these elites. The various subject nations had little to do with them, except as victims, for they had no share in political power.

Once, however, those nations were mobil-

ized and organized, the common life of the villages rapidly became impossible. Greek and Turkish peasants could live at peace under the indifferent rule of Ottoman bureaucrats. But they could not live at peace under Greek or Turkish officials acting in the name of the liberated Greek or Turkish nation. When political power was the issue between them, only mass transfer of populations could avoid the fury of mutual slaughter. The same story can be told of India, and here there is a special poignancy. For Nehru's provisional government was warned in 1947 that communal rioting and massacre on a scale never seen before would follow the partition of the subcontinent, and it was urged to provide every possible means of transportation to carry people across the new border. But the warning was ignored, at least partly because of the socialist convictions of Nehru and the men around him. They thought communal hatred was an imperial contrivance; in its full fury it was, in fact, the child of independence.

III

The left has always underestimated both the intensity and the value of national feelings, even when its parties and movements were systematically exploiting them. The value doesn't derive only from the fact that human beings respond to oppression, and survive it, by nourishing and cultivating their particular ethnic, racial, and religious identities. It is also and more importantly the case that they cannot live in freedom without creating such identities. Political freedom, the freedom of a community rather than of an individual, may begin with the removal of imperial bureaucrats, but its full development involves the sharing and shaping of a common life. To be sure, the citizens of new states often find themselves, after independence, with little more than what Marx called "the illusion of a common life." But their nationalism is nevertheless not an illusion, and whether liberation occurs just once or again and again, what the people insist on

each time is the reality of a national history that includes them and of the symbols and rituals of national unity. Their self-government, when it comes, produces a political culture radically different from the cosmopolitanism of the old elites, if only because it is the achievement of men and women with whom the old elites never bothered to talk.

Precisely for this reason, national liberation is threatening to all those minority groups who find themselves trapped within the boundaries of a new nation-state, face to face with a community mobilized for action, eager to affirm its collective identity. In the past such minorities made their peace with imperial bureaucrats and were protected or ignored by them; now the minorities stand in the way of national unity. If recent history is any evidence, they will fare badly in the hands of newly liberated peoples and their new and busy officialdom. So it is not enough to call for the independence of this or that oppressed nation, though that is surely the right thing to do. One's political virtue is always tested by the nation that comes next. Each act of liberation makes the next more necessary, if crime and cruelty are to be avoided. The universal principle that all men have a right to govern themselves points toward the proliferation of what, from the standpoint of the old empires (or of the world socialist republic), must look like parochial and archaic communities: the return of peoples long repressed.

The freedom of Iraq, then, requires the freedom of Kurdistan; the freedom of Nigeria, Biafra; the freedom of Pakistan, Bengal. Similarly, the freedom of Israel requires that of Palestine; and conversely, for those leftists already committed to Palestinian liberation, Palestine requires Israel. There is no way of avoiding the logic of the process—at least no honest way—unless one decides that one national or protonational group deserves to be subjected to another.

BUT IT is a dilemma that universalism should lead so inexorably to parochialism on a uni-

versal scale. And since leftists did not expect the dilemma, it should not be surprising that so many of them have coped with it so badly, choosing to support or not to support this or that national group on the basis of the most arbitrary distinctions (progressive/reactionary) or practicing a kind of guilt by association (as if oppressed people did not search for allies wherever they can find them). And then leftists are discovered simultaneously supporting secession here and the slaughter of secessionists there, paying close attention to this national liberation movement while pretending that that one does not exist. No doubt there are ways of rationalizing such judgments or refusals of judgment, and even expedient reasons to offer for them. But I can see no secure or justified general position short of support for every popularly based movement (though not for every vanguard elite) that aims at national liberation. How can one measure the value of one people's self-discovery and nationalist self-assertion against another's? Leaving aside the most perverse of measurements, which devalues one's own people, and the next most perverse, which exalts only one's own, surely the relevant measuring principle is equality. What is required is equal political recognition for all those aspiring nations which accept the principle of equal political recognition.

But if we apply this principle, we are forced to worry about drawing lines between the new nations. For what they aspire to is independence. They want to have a life of their own, reasonably secure against the interventions of foreign powers. There may, of course, be some other political arrangement than conventional statehood that would make this possible: so advocates of binationalism (among others) claim. But assuming that the immediate cause of the liberation movement is the experience of sovereign power in someone else's hands, the effort to gather it into one's own hands is not merely understandable, it is morally irresistible. Faced with a people responding to its own fear and suffering, seeking immediate relief,

whatever criticisms we might want to make of the state as an institution have to be postponed—or redirected. Turn Norway and Sweden into a binational state if you can; but set the Biafrans free.

At such moments, it seems to me, ordinary decency requires the drawing of new lines on the map—an uninspiring, often arbitrary and cruel business, but necessary nevertheless. Here is the maxim of a chastened humanism: good borders make good neighbors. And a good border, in a time of growing national antagonism, is a line so drawn that different peoples are on different sides. I don't want to pretend that this is very much more than a minimal moral position. There is, in fact, no acceptable way of getting everyone on the right side of the line, and there remain individuals of all sorts for whom neither side and possibly no side can be right (the position, once, of the Jews): they will stay behind to test the quality of the new nation. The need for good borders is not all that follows from the recognition of nationalist feeling I have been urging. Having established boundaries, it remains to fight for minority rights, equal protection, and all the liberal safeguards within them, and then for economic and political cooperation across them.

But whatever we do, nation-building in new states is sure to be rough on groups marginal to the nation (and too small or scattered to secede from the nation)—those archetypal aliens of the Third World, for example—Jews, Levantines, Indians, and Chinese, or colonial settlers like the French of Algeria. For them, very often, the roughness can only be smoothed a little; it cannot be avoided. And, sometimes, it can only be smoothed by helping people to leave who have to leave, like the Indians of Kenya and Tanzania, the colons of North Africa, the Jews of the Arab world. No doubt this is a defeat for socialist internationalism, as it is for ordinary liberalism, but the refusal to help only leads to a worse defeat. Emigration is the private equivalent of secession, and

like secession it is a right that requires more than theoretical vindication. It points toward an immediate and pressing problem: emigrants from country X must become immigrants to country Y. There must be a place to go; there must be havens for refugees. Israel was set up to be such a haven, and in turning now more directly to the question of binationalism, I want to focus on that feature of the new state.

IV
I have been talking about Jews and Arabs all along, though I have used other names and attempted a more general argument. Whatever may be unique in their two histories, their inability to live together is not unique. Yet the efforts to create a Jewish-Arab state go back many years, and in the 1930s and '40s were supported by men as committed to their own people as to the principles of internationalism. I cannot discuss here the history of their efforts nor describe the reasons for their failure. But I can at least suggest one of the reasons by exploring the question of immigration policy, which is central to the debate even today. For here is the point where all the arguments about sovereignty come into sharpest focus.

All states have immigration policies and most states make distinctions in their treatment of different groups of possible immigrants. These distinctions are sometimes abhorrent, but by no means necessarily so. It is even generally recognized in the international community that certain states have special responsibilities toward certain peoples. In the aftermath of World War I and of the Balkan settlement, for example, Greece received many refugees from present-day Turkey and treated them differently from other immigrants. It did so because they were Greeks, though they had never lived within the newly drawn borders of the Greek state. But they spoke Greek, worshiped according to the Greek Orthodox rite, thought of themselves as Greeks, and were not regarded as foreigners by the citizens of Greece. Similarly,

after World War II, Poland received refugees from the east, as did Germany, and the preferential treatment accorded these peoples was never, so far as I know, called discriminatory. Now the question that faced and still faces advocates of a Jewish-Arab state is simply this: What people or peoples are to be given preferential treatment? But this question opens up every other: How will decisions about immigration policy be made? What group will constitute or come to constitute the majority of the population? And so on.

Contemporary advocates of binationalism almost always insist that the Israelis must repeal the Law of Return, which declares that Jews will receive preferential treatment. But surely this would compromise rather than fulfill the binational character of the successor state, for it would deny the existence of a *nation* of Jews capable, as Greeks, Poles, and Germans are capable, of rescuing and rehabilitating their fellow nationals. At any rate, there are very few Jews ready to agree to that; nor were the foremost advocates of binationalism in the decade before Israeli independence—men such as Martin Buber, Judah Magnes, and the leaders of the left-socialist parties—willing even to consider the end of Jewish *aliyah* [immigration]. “Our Jewish destiny,” wrote Buber in a letter to Gandhi, “is indissolubly bound up with this possibility of gathering, and this in Palestine.” He writes here, in effect, as a spokesman of the Jewish national liberation movement, for Jewish history had made “gathering” the essential prerequisite of freedom. After World War II, it seemed the prerequisite also of survival, and that is a time Israeli Jews are not likely to forget.

There was never any significant number of Arab leaders ready to concede the Jewish right of return, though that right will doubtless be asserted on behalf of the Palestinians, now scattered throughout the Middle East, if a Palestinian state is ever established. And that is a right the Palestinians have, as do the Jews. It is virtually inconceivable,

however, that the two rights could be accommodated within a single binational state. This is one of the hardest of issues, and every other difficulty of binationalism bears upon it and is exaggerated by it. The new parochialism with its intense pride and exclusiveness, the deep mistrust of foreigners, the actual memories of war, the uncertain balance of power and the fear it breeds: all these barriers to coexistence become enlarged and distorted beyond all reason when what is at stake is literally the future population of the proposed union. If the “gathering” of Jews and Palestinians is morally necessary, then two separate states, respectful of each other’s sovereignty, are also morally necessary.

One might, of course, question the moral necessity, and advocates of binationalism probably must do this at some point, though recent advocates have tended to press their skepticism only against the Jews. They argue that a binational state can and ought to be built upon the latent class loyalties of workers from the two national groups. They assume that such loyalties are morally superior to the manifest commitment of Jewish workers to diaspora Jewry (and I suppose, though the point is not stressed, of Palestinian guerrillas to the “Arab nation”). Hence their attacks upon the Law of Return. I am not sure how such judgments are made, but I doubt very much that the Jews of old Palestine would rank high on any available moral scale had they turned their backs on the Jews of Hitler’s Europe and sought an alliance with the (virtually nonexistent) Arab Left.

Probably the argument reflects a theory of history according to which class struggle must at some point supersede national conflict, and “objective material interests” must override national feeling. At some point—perhaps; but surely not at this point. Those Jews who might plausibly struggle alongside Arab workers are mostly immigrants or refugees from Arab countries. If binationalism were a lively option, they might well

have stayed where they were. If the liberation movements of North Africa had not aimed so explicitly at creating Arab nation-states, they might never have become immigrants at all. Having immigrated, they are likely to associate their objective interests with the state that offered them a place to go. They have already chosen nation over class, as has virtually everyone in the Third World—which is not to say that the class struggle is at an end in Israel or anywhere else.

The choice of brethren and comrades cannot be dictated by abstract theory. Instead, we must begin our theories with the choices men actually make and have made. The defense of national liberation and then of the right to statehood represents such a beginning. It pays attention to what people want, always a good thing to do, and imperative, one would have thought, for the Left. It is, however, as I have stressed before, only a beginning. One can still attack the internal character of this or that movement or new state (I have a list of movements and states that need attacking) or call for radical forms of cooperation across party lines and international borders. It is even possible to urge that the right to statehood be foregone, so long as one continues to defend the right and the security of all those peoples who choose to exercise it. There is nothing wrong, that is, with attempts to convert the Jews—or the Palestinians, Tanzanians, or Pakistanis—to socialist internationalism. That is an old and honorable leftist occupation.

But there is a great deal that is wrong with attempts, before the conversion of the Jews, to undermine the state of Israel or call its survival into question. Contemporary advocates of binationalism are at least sometimes engaged in just such an attempt. That is why their major propaganda effort focuses on the people of the United States and Western Europe rather than on Israelis and Palestinians: it is not aimed at those who must be convinced if binationalism is ever to work, but rather at Israel's international allies. And then binationalism must be opposed, not only because it would deny Jews the right of national liberation, but also because it would deny them the protection of a state at a time when there is less hope than ever before of surviving without that protection.

Nor will such efforts contribute to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, for no settlement there is possible that does not provide the conditions of "normal human existence" for both Jews and Arabs. At this moment in history, those conditions are represented by the nation-state. To deny any people statehood is not simply to put forward a theoretical position; it is virtually to make war against them. And that will not contribute to binationalism, or federation, or world socialism, or whatever we might find hopeful in the future. □

This article is part of *Israel, the Arabs, and the Middle East*, Irving Howe and Carl Gershman editors, copyright © 1972 by Bantam Books, and published this spring by Bantam Books in paper and by Quadrangle Books in cloth. It appears here with the publishers' kind permission.

Stephen Miller

Is Hypocrisy What's Wrong?

In the past few years the word hypocrisy has been used increasingly in political discussions. The author of a column last year in the *New Yorker* wondered, for example, whether some good might come of America's recognition that the Vietnam war is a catastrophe: "Such an admission and recognition," he said, "has helped create a generation that will never entirely lose its disgust for hypocrisy or abandon its search for a sweeter life." Such vague moralizing has become increasingly common in American journalism, perhaps because many journalists cannot resist the temptation of becoming more "significant" writers by giving us their reflections on American life. The issues they touch on are serious, but often their response to them is tainted with cant, a word Samuel Johnson defined as "a whining pretension to goodness, in formal and affected terms." The moralizing style is a rhetoric meant for those who are too bored or apocalyptic to deal with particular issues, a rhetoric that makes a high-minded appeal to our worst self-righteous tendencies. And the easiest way to moralize is to accuse someone of hypocrisy, a charge that shifts the discussion from particular issues to unverifiable motives.

Hypocrisy, in fact, seems to be *the* American sin for many of the disenchanted young, though the rise in the use of this word suggests that not only the young but also many other Americans no longer believe in the reality of appearances—that is, in the reasons given for certain political actions. Skepticism about the policies of a government is of course a healthy phenomenon, but a frame of mind that thinks of all democratic

forms as a facade may lead to the breakdown of such forms.

The word hypocrisy has been with us a long time. In Periclean Athens the noun *hypocrites* meant an actor, someone who professionally plays a part, but in the third century B.C. *hypocrites* gradually assumed our modern meaning—someone who deceives, especially someone who pretends to virtues that he doesn't have. As such, the word becomes an important noun in the New Testament, where Christ uses it to describe the Pharisees. But Christ invests the word with a new and subtle meaning; when he calls the Pharisees hypocrites he is speaking of the difference between their external piety and their inner spiritual emptiness, a difference that is unknown to the Pharisees themselves. The important point is that such hypocrisy on the part of the Pharisees is unconscious; they possess a spiritual blindness that comes from their pride in obeying only the law of their religion.

Christ judges the Pharisees for their spiritual blindness, and one reason for his condemnation of them is that the Pharisees themselves have presumed to act as judges. When Christ says "Pass no judgment, and you will not be judged" (Matthew 7:1), he is saying that only God can judge whether people are truly pious or not, for only God can know the motives behind the actions of people. The Pharisees of the New Testament played God, for they presumed to judge themselves pious and presumed to judge others impious; they presumed to judge someone's inner spirit on the basis of his outward behavior.

In criticizing the Pharisees Christ is stress-

ing the mysterious opaqueness of human beings.

A long tradition of Christian skeptics, a tradition that has had its fullest flowering in France, has made much the same point. Unlike Christ, these writers do judge men by their actions, but they do so reluctantly, knowing that to make a simple correlation between external appearance and inner reality, as the Pharisees did, is foolish and misguided. These skeptics are aware, as La Rochefoucauld said, that “to know things really well we must know them in all their ramifications; these being infinite, our knowledge is always superficial and inexact.”¹ These skeptics may speculate endlessly about motives, but they know that man can judge his fellowmen only by their actions. They know that man is, by his very nature, hypocritical—hypocritical in the sense that there is a gap between his actions and his motives. This gap exists because we all need to justify our actions to ourselves—need, that is, to cover up any motives that might place us in a bad light. Hypocrisy—the way we unconsciously lie to ourselves—is the human condition.

La Rochefoucauld is usually labeled a cynic, a man who described the vanity, selfishness, and duplicity of people, especially the people he observed at the court of Louis XIV—decadent aristocrats who lived in a world in which “hypocrisy is the homage that vice offers to virtue.” But to see La Rochefoucauld as merely a cynic is to forget that he moved in the same circles as Pascal, and that often his analysis of man is similar to Pascal’s. The thrust of La Rochefoucauld’s argument is not that the world is full of selfish and hypocritical schemers but that man is an impenetrable mystery. Not only are other men mysterious, but man is also mys-

terious to himself, and therefore he should be wary of judging anyone else’s inner reality. La Rochefoucauld said that “it is easier to know mankind in general than any particular man.”

Although La Rochefoucauld does at times suggest that some hypocrisy is conscious, his major point is that most hypocrisy is unconscious: the homage that vice pays to virtue may be a way of deceiving ourselves that our good actions are done because of good motives. “Our actions are like rhyme-games: we fill out the rest of the lines with whatever motives for the actions we please.” And while La Rochefoucauld suggests that we are often most hypocritical when we are doing good, he does not deny the worth of such good actions. The motives for these actions may be suspect, but he does not want to leave the reader with a sense of moral outrage and with a desire to unmask hypocrites. He wants the reader to become tolerant. We must not be too quick in our judgment of others because we may be blind to our very reasons for judging them.

Montaigne and Pascal, like La Rochefoucauld, also question our ability either to unmask the motives of others or even to understand our own motives. Montaigne ends his essay, “Of the Inconsistency of our Actions,” with the following remark:

In view of this [the inconsistency of our actions], a sound intellect will refuse to judge men simply by their outward actions; we must probe inside and discover what springs set men in motion. But since this is an arduous and hazardous undertaking, I wish fewer people would meddle with it.²

Montaigne realizes how difficult it is to judge men only by their actions; but at the same time he realizes how dangerous it is to try to discover the motives of others. Pascal would agree, I think, with Montaigne’s reservation. How can we know other people’s motives,

¹ Quotations from La Rochefoucauld are from *The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld*, trans. Louis Kronenberger (New York: Random House, 1959).

² *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 244.

he might say, if we cannot even know our own? Summarizing a letter of Pascal's Erich Auerbach said:

It is always to be feared that what inspires us is not God but a secret egoism, and self-examination is far from reliable, but often a source of delusion. Far more trustworthy than the examination of our inner motives is the scrutiny of our outward conduct.³

Pascal and Montaigne, like La Rochefoucauld, are forever describing the delusions of man, but their skepticism does not degenerate into misanthropy; La Rochefoucauld's maxims, like Montaigne's essays and Pascal's *Pensées*, are not reductive. Halfway between the angels and the beasts on the great chain of being, man is a mysterious chaos of inconsistencies, and the imagination, according to La Rochefoucauld, "could not invent the vast number of inconsistencies with which each of us is naturally endowed." Speaking of man's self-love, he also said: "There is no plumbing the depths or piercing the darkness of its abysses; darting in and out of them it escapes the sharpest eye and is often invisible even to itself." La Rochefoucauld respects the complexity of man, a creature whose unconscious hypocrisy makes him almost awesome.

There is nothing particularly awesome, however, about conscious hypocrisy; it is a minor but necessary social virtue. La Rochefoucauld realizes that if we are to live with other people we must at times put on the mask. In *The Misanthrope*, Molière—his contemporary—describes how ridiculous a man becomes if he strives to be sincere with everyone. Alceste is a comic fool who in the end despises everyone, including himself, and threatens to leave society—the equivalent in 17th-century France of wanting to leave life itself. Conscious hypocrisy becomes dangerous only when it moves in the direction of

fraud, when the difference between one's appearance and one's reality is total. Although in *The Misanthrope* Molière makes fun of Alceste's desire for complete sincerity, in *Tartuffe* Molière warns us that a man who uses his appearance of piety for impious ends can do quite a lot of harm.

Conscious hypocrisy is a minor virtue, but unconscious hypocrisy, which is common to all men, may become a vice when someone is completely convinced of his own piety and is quick to judge others impious. Such a man is especially dangerous when he is in a position not only to judge others but also to convict them.

Robespierre seems to have been such a man, a man who would not have understood La Rochefoucauld's warning that "almost no one is perceptive enough to realize all the harm he does." Robespierre, like La Rochefoucauld, was fond of the word mask, for he continually spoke of unmasking the enemies of the country. But Robespierre, unlike La Rochefoucauld, hated hypocrisy and for him hypocrisy became *the* sin that would undermine all the glorious efforts of the French Revolution. "The most beautiful of all revolutions," he had warned the Jacobins as early as July 1792, "degenerates every day into a shameful system of Machiavelianism and hypocrisy."⁴ And in a series of notes that apparently were written when he became a member of the Committee of Public Safety in July 1793, Robespierre said: "What is our aim? It is the use of the Constitution for the benefit of the people. Who are likely to oppose us? The rich and the corrupt. What methods will they employ? Slander and hypocrisy."⁵ In his desire to unmask hypocrites, Robespierre judged men not only by their actions but also by their supposed motives.

³ "On the Political Theory of Pascal," *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Meridian, 1959), pp. 119–120.

⁴ Quoted from Alfred Cobban, "The Political Ideas of Robespierre, 1792–95," *Aspects of the French Revolution* (New York: Braziller, 1968), p. 173.

⁵ Quoted from J. M. Thompson, *Robespierre and the French Revolution* (London: English Universities' Press, 1952), p. 79.

Robespierre, we should remember, proclaimed himself the disciple of Rousseau. In some ways Rousseau is like the Bible: you can prove whatever you want from his writings. But we do know Rousseau detested La Rochefoucauld and we do know Rousseau thought that Alceste was the hero of *The Misanthrope*. Rousseau's writings reveal a powerful bias against the customs and culture of urban society, a society that makes man live in a world of appearances—that is, makes man hypocritical. We would do no injustice to Rousseau if we rephrased the famous remark with which he begins Chapter One of the *Social Contract*—"Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains"—and said: "Man is born sincere; and everywhere he is hypocritical." Rousseau thought that conscious hypocrisy was a profound aberration in man's development, and the Reign of Terror, in which Robespierre played a major role, in some respects represents the extraordinary attempt of Rousseau's disciple to rid France of hypocrisy.

Robespierre's obsession with hypocrisy cannot be separated from his obsession with virtue. "The sole foundation of civil society is morality," he said in a speech of May 7, 1794.⁶ But when Robespierre speaks of virtue he does not mean one's actions but one's inner purity, and Robespierre wanted a France full of inwardly pure Frenchmen. We must make allowances for the inflation of all political speeches, yet Robespierre, I think, was speaking with conviction when he said in a famous speech of February 5, 1794: "We wish to substitute in our country morality for egotism, probity for a mere sense of honor, principle for habit, duty for etiquette, [and] the empire of reason for the tyranny of custom. . . ."⁷

⁶ Quoted from *Robespierre*, ed. George Rudé (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 70.

⁷ Quoted from R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Committee of Public Safety During the Terror* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 275.

How to accomplish this? By unmasking the enemies of the country, those people who might appear virtuous and patriotic but who were in reality corrupt and treacherous. In his last speech, when he addressed the National Convention two days before he was guillotined, he said: "I am here to unmask the abuses which are bringing about the ruin of the *patrie* and which your incorruptibility alone can restrain. . . ."⁸ France, he continued, was composed of two kinds of people,

the party of good citizens and the party of the bad. Patriotism is not an affair of party, but an affair of the heart. . . . I see a world peopled with dupes and imposters, but the number of the imposters is the smaller. It is they who must be punished for the wrongs and the ills of the world.

When La Rochefoucauld said that "the world in general is a congregation of masks," he meant that hypocrisy is a basic characteristic of man. Robespierre, however, divided France into two kinds of people: those who were hypocrites and those who were not. "The arms of liberty," he warned the Convention in his last speech, "must not be touched except by pure hands. Let us purify the national system of surveillance, instead of covering up vice. . . ." But by this time it was too late for Robespierre to do anything about a national system of surveillance; his hands, according to the Convention, were not pure. He himself had just been accused of hypocrisy.

THE HISTORIANS and biographers have debated endlessly about Robespierre's character, but it is the German playwright Georg Büchner who, in his analysis of Robespierre in *Danton's Death*, most powerfully conveys the peculiar distortions that a man who hated hypocrisy might have been prey to. In Scene Five of Part One, Danton complains to Robespierre about the latter's vir-

⁸ A major portion of the speech appears in *Robespierre*, ed. George Rudé, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-78.

tue. Danton, like La Rochefoucauld, says that we all need to think of ourselves as good: "Conscience is a mirror for a monkey to make soulful faces at. We all dress up as best we can and go out to whatever party we can fit into."⁹ Robespierre dresses up as The Incorruptible, and in order to convince himself of his own virtue he guillotines others. "The guillotine is your private wash-tub," Danton says. "You wash your dirty linen in other people's blood."

After Danton leaves, Robespierre tries to justify to himself his order for the guillotining of Danton, but he is plagued by the thought that he too is a hypocrite, by the thought that he is killing Danton not as an enemy of the Revolution but as a threat to his own power. La Rochefoucauld knew that all thought is impure, that as soon as we begin to look into ourselves we may find motives we do not want to find. But Robespierre, unlike La Rochefoucauld, refuses to accept these impure thoughts: "Why can I not free my thoughts? . . . What is it in me that lies?" Not only does he hate his own thoughts, but he also hates the idea that other people have such thoughts. Walking to the window, he looks out at the sleeping city of Paris and says to himself: "In one hour the spirit commits more deeds in thought than the lazy organism of the body can imitate in years. Sin is in thought. Whether the body puts it to practice is chance." Büchner's Robespierre loves the idea of mankind but hates men; men have impure thoughts.

The conventional negative view of Robespierre—that he was a conscious hypocrite who pretended to be interested in the virtue of France but was really interested in acquiring power—misses the point. As J. M. Thompson realizes in his excellent biography of Robespierre, this humorless and priggish lawyer was the most dangerous kind of *unconscious* hypocrite. Convinced of his own

virtue and convinced of his own piety toward the sacred principles of the Revolution, Robespierre managed to convince himself that his bloody acts were for the good of France.

La Rochefoucauld, whose maxims seem as if they were written to provide a running commentary on this hater of hypocrisy who wore the mask of humility but presumed to play God, said: "We get so much in the habit of wearing a disguise before others that we finally appear disguised before ourselves." Robespierre wore the mask of The Incorruptible before others, but in order to wear that mask when he was by himself, in order to rid himself of the fear that he too was a hypocrite, he had to keep on unmasking others, especially those who seemed to be on his side. He needed the Terror to convince himself of his own virtue. Robespierre truly was The Incorruptible but, as La Rochefoucauld said, "there are bad people who would be less dangerous if they had no good in them."

The dangers of Robespierre's politics—with himself as both the Messiah who saves France and the God of the Last Judgment who separates the hypocrites from the pure at heart—are apparent. The accusation of hypocrisy is so demoralizing because the accused can say nothing in his own defense. Anything he says will be considered a lie. The accused is neither innocent until proven guilty nor guilty until proven innocent; he is guilty because he is accused.

Thus the desire to unmask hypocrites is destructive to the political realm. The political realm, in fact, requires conscious hypocrites—requires, that is, people who can put on performances. And if a man hates such performances he will hate the political realm with a fury that has nothing to do with the issues at hand. Shakespeare's Coriolanus, for example, is in many ways an admirable man, but he cannot bear to go through the performance of being elected

⁹ Quotations from Büchner are from *Danton's Death*, trans. James Maxwell (San Francisco: Chandler, 1961).

consul. His inability to put on the mask of a man who is friendly to the people brings disorder both to Rome and to his own life, a disorder that ends in his isolation and death.

Coriolanus, as Northrop Frye has rightly pointed out, is not a proto-fascist, for fascism is a disease of democracy. He is not a demagogue, for he despises the mob of common people and he tells them so. Coriolanus is a childish and irresponsible patrician who does not fulfill his duties. Although his criticisms of the people's desire for political power are often intelligent, his own refusal to play a part with them reveals that he cares more about being true to himself than about the order and health of Rome. He may want to preserve order, but he hates the customs that are necessary if order is to be preserved:

Why in this wolvisch toge should I stand
here,

To beg of Hob and Dick that does appear
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me
to't.

What custom wills, in all things should we
do't,

The dust on antique time would lie unswept
And mountainous error be too highly heaped
For truth t' o'erpeer. [II:iii, 110–116.]

Like Molière's Alceste, Coriolanus even-

tually becomes an isolated man. "He that is incapable of living in society is a god or a beast," Aristotle said in the *Politics*. Coriolanus is a bit of both, and for such a "lonely dragon," for such an unpolitical man, there is not, although he thinks there is, "a world elsewhere." His hatred of hypocrisy leads to his betrayal of Rome; then the betrayer himself is betrayed by the people who welcomed his aid. Both he and Rome pay a high price for his refusal to put on a mask.

By contrast Menenius, the friend and supporter of Coriolanus, is a consummate politician. But Menenius has had a bad press recently; his conscious hypocrisy, self-deprecating humor, and question-begging speech to the mob in Act I, in which he compares the Senate to the stomach, make him a vulnerable figure. No wonder Günter Grass calls him "a comic slyboots à la Polonius."¹⁰ And Jan Kott, also comparing Menenius to Polonius, calls him "the ideologue of the patricians, in the sense in which Marx contemptuously used the word 'ideologue,' . . . [and] a tactician and philosopher of opportunism."¹¹ Kott wants it both ways—Menenius as a vacuous old man and Menenius as a clever spokesman for the ruling class. But Menenius' sententious remarks are not examples of deeply felt wisdom; they are strategies for the moment, attempts to placate either Coriolanus or the angry mob. Menenius is the great but ineffectual diplomat in the play, always acting a part in order to prevent civil chaos. The parts he plays, therefore, are not for his own sake but for the sake of Rome. After Coriolanus has once again incensed the mob, Menenius says:

I'll try whether my old wit be in request
With those that have but little. This must
be patched
With cloth of any color. [III:i, 252–254.]

To Contributors

Like other periodicals, we have asked for stamped self-addressed envelopes with submitted articles but sometimes have returned them when such envelopes weren't included. The cost of doing so has become prohibitive, and we have to announce that from now on we will not return any manuscript unless it comes with a stamped self-addressed envelope.

THE EDITORS

¹⁰ Introduction to *The Plebians Rehearse the Up-rising*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966), p. xvi.

¹¹ *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 189.

Menenius tries to calm the passions of the crowd, tries to prevent Rome from coming apart. He is no mere ideologue of the ruling class but the most able spokesman of the class that should rule if Rome is to be an ordered and harmonious society. Unlike Coriolanus, he is a responsible member of his class. His hypocrisy makes him a humane man, whereas Coriolanus' integrity, like Robespierre's, is shadowed with vindictiveness and pride, an integrity that takes its toll in blood.

Is the charge of hypocrisy, then, completely irrelevant to the political realm? I think so. The imputation of hypocrisy prevents political discussion because it moves the discussion to a realm where one gets bogged down in an endless and senseless hunt for motives. As Hannah Arendt said:

"In politics, more than anywhere else, we have no possibility of distinguishing between being and appearance. In the realm of human affairs, being and appearance are indeed one and the same."¹² In judging a politician, then, we can only consider appearances—what he says and what he does. If there is a gap between his professed intentions and his subsequent actions, the only useful question—unless we have conclusive evidence that he lied—is whether or not there are good reasons for his change of policy. We would do well to remove the word hypocrisy from political discussions and leave it for our private concerns and the subtle speculations of a La Rochefoucauld.

¹² *On Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1963), pp. 93–94. □

in a current issue of

THE INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST

William Domhoff: Some Friendly Answers to Radical Critics.
Richard Flacks: Towards a Socialist Sociology.
Marlene Dixon: Academic Roles and Functions.

The Insurgent Sociologist is published by the NUC-Radical Sociology Caucus
It is put out about 5 times a year

THE INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST

Department of Sociology
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

INSTITUTION _____

Sustaining Subscription \$5.00 (one year)
Low Income Subscription \$3.00 (one year)
Larger Contributions are needed and greatly appreciated.

Richard Lourie

When to Leave the Country

A Study of George Grosz

My question is simple: is it possible for a man to know if his society is heading for a disaster he would just as soon avoid?

The history of the 20th century shows this to be a rather practical question. The 30 years that remain are uncertain, and not even the optimists are predicting clear sailing. Crisis and conflict will define our immediate future just as they defined our immediate past. It follows that at certain times and in certain places the pressures will coalesce and erupt into social disasters, in the guise of revolutions, rightist coups d'état, civil wars. These hypothetical events need not be as dramatic as the invasion of Czechoslovakia or the war in Pakistan. The arrest of Andrei Amalrik, the author of *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?*, is just as good a case in point; the disaster happened, just to him alone. When another Soviet writer, Anatoli Kuznetsov, chose to defect and seek freedom in the West, he was berated by Amalrik who saw the Soviet writer's responsibility to remain at home and continue the struggle. Freedom, said Amalrik, was something to be found not in a bourgeois democracy but in the relationship between a man and his conscience. But—and this is most important—reality for Kuznetsov and Amalrik is not the same thing, and a man in any modern society has no other resource but his own frail sense of what is real and what is to come. In the last analysis, all men are isolated when it comes to the assessment of a situation in which a judgment leading to definite action is required, for one cannot accept another man's vision of reality without surrendering

a power and a responsibility that keeps one human.

It is worthwhile to pause for a moment and examine the respective positions of an individual living inside the Soviet Union and one living outside it. Intellectuals inside the Soviet Union have three main sources of information—the official ones, the underground Samizdat, and whatever a man sees with his own eyes and hears with his own ears. The official sources are like difficult modern poems—they surrender their hidden meanings only to those who have schooled themselves in the art of reading between the lines. But, as with modern poetry, too often one is left with ambiguity, a demonic confusion of possibilities, nothing solid on which to plant one's feet. The underground sources report violations of human rights by the state and examples of individual resistance. There is no reason to doubt their veracity but, as always, the problem is how to evaluate their relative significance and then assess coming trends. The same goes for what a man reads on the faces of people in the streets, what he picks up from voices jammed by paranoia. For a Soviet man the problem is especially difficult because he must attempt to put together a puzzle with a good half of the pieces missing. For a man in the West this situation has a reverse twist. Deluged with puzzle pieces, he cannot see the reality for the information; he hears thousands of voices, the voices of his own hopes and fears, the voices of politicians of every stripe, the bland objectivity of reporters, pictures, articles, words without end. A feast and a famine.

Yet the situations of the Soviet and the Western man are not so dissimilar for, in the end, both must realize the impossibility of knowing reality solely by the processing and evaluation of information. I resist the temptation of saying that Soviet man, deprived of information, is in a better position to listen to his instincts than his Western counterpart, since there are other factors at work there robbing him of assurance in his own perceptions. A well-known Polish joke will illustrate this: "Maciek is a little disturbed, you know, paranoid. He doesn't think he's being followed." The joke would have equal validity for an American Negro who could not be certain if it is racism he encounters or his own paranoid projections, created, of course, by that very racism. It is no wonder that men, overwhelmed by such anxieties, form parties, adopt dogmas and frozen stances on changing events. Anyone who has ever witnessed a social upheaval, on whatever scale, knows that men with definite goals and definite ideas usually function better in such circumstances, because they have been trained not to let their minds become overloaded and thus weaken their will. It would appear that both the tragic Hamletism of liberals and the tragic cruelty of revolutionaries stem, in large part, from their reactions to the immense quantity of information produced by a high-velocity situation.

My concern is with the man who does not wish to fall into that trap, who prefers to assume responsibility for his own actions and refuses to abdicate the right of defining reality for himself. Owing allegiance to values he has freely chosen he may in a given situation stay and fight, or leave the country—as he thinks best. Now this problem is really a modern one and bound up with the relationship of the individual to the collective, something of which we are practically ignorant. Obviously, our lives are bound up with that of the collective and yet at this point the rhythms and dynamics of the collective seem as massively unpredictable as nature seemed in the days when science had

not yet separated itself from divination and propitiation. Can any such knowledge of the collective be obtained, or must we resign ourselves to its mysterious and overwhelming might? As we have seen, access to information alone is not the solution. Polls of national mood are often shallow and often simply wrong, as the recent election of Heath in England has shown. The sociological tools at hand in fact are unable to penetrate deeply into the collective and, what's more, very little effort is made in that direction. Academic cautiousness, the liberal tradition of uncertainty, and the failure of European and Western literature to take the problems of man seriously enough in the last two decades foster a sort of shallow ignorance.

BUT HERE the attempt is to see the world through the eyes of an individual trying to determine his relation to the world around him. I won't give this individual any definite features other than to say he is someone for whom the idea of a free and responsible life has not vanished. How many such men there are on this planet I would not even attempt to guess, but wherever they are they share certain assumptions, attitudes, hunches. The first of these is that they will never be able to make a proper judgment in a crisis situation merely by reviewing information. In fact, one should not necessarily assume that these people are intellectuals. Although it is true that intellectuals often have the most to lose when social situations reach a critical mess, this is by no means an absolute. Many intellectuals accommodate themselves to tyranny, and many help in its creation. There are other people, simply people, whose innate ties with the spirit of free life does not permit them to function well in mass societies—they can be found in the virgin lands of Siberia and the American Pacific Northwest. They have the good sense to move away from the centers of power into areas where they can live on their own terms. To wonder about their probable fate is intriguing—perhaps they will be swallowed up by the spreading mass society,

perhaps they will colonize new planets when Earth becomes as unbearable as New York City. But to move to the country is one thing, to leave one's native land quite another.

The psychological legacy of the Nazis is so great and enduring one is tempted to call the century theirs. The dead are buried, Warsaw is rebuilt from rubble and brick dust, and Western Germany enjoys a higher standard of living than victorious England and France. But that is the realm of tangible history. The zone of collective psychology must also be understood if we are to gauge the impact of the Nazis on us, living men, thinking and making our lives at this point in time. Had the Nazi experience happened a hundred years ago, we would feel that much better about it, but the fact is that the worst epoch in history belongs to its most recent phase and our minds, like children's, are most strongly impressed by example. The example of Nazism makes us afraid of the state, society, our fellowmen, both of reason and of passion, and of ourselves, if we are honest. Worst of all, we are unable to decide how much of this fear is paranoia and how much good sense; and a good deal of the utopianism of the present day can be seen as a reaction to the demonstrated brutality of man, a refusal to accept it, an escape into sociological hallucinations. Some radical American youths see fascism in every public official whose political orientation is more conservative than theirs. In turn, these conservative officials view the radicals as Communists (or their dupes), or as anarchists who create the very situations in which a confused public will support the strengthening of the state to ensure domestic tranquility. Furthermore, there are obvious protofascist elements in the radicals' behavior that disturb those who cherish civil liberties but who also realize that their foundation is a reasonably stable society. This legacy of Nazism, coupled with the confusion of values that marks our time, leads to a general sense of foreboding, of apocalypse around the corner.

More than ever before there are large

numbers of Americans discussing whether to leave the country or not, and others, whose numbers are statistically vague, who have already done so. For some the draft was the deciding factor, and the black Americans who live in Paris or Stockholm belong to a different but related category. Previously, people did not abandon America for political motives; usually it was to flee vulgarity, provincialism, as in the Lost Generation exodus of the '20s. But, to alter slightly Anatole France's remark, if 50 million people do a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing. All those who sat on mountains to await the end of the world or fled California last year when it was supposed to fall into the ocean, or those who went to Australia in the '50s to buy time against the inevitable nuclear holocaust were, as of the moment, 100 percent wrong. But tomorrow is another day.

SCANNING THE WORLD in a moment of crisis, our hypothetical individual has only three choices when all is said and done.

The first is the most tempting—to decide that the evil around him is the same evil that has always been present in the world, but that its modern guises now prompt one to identify it as something peculiarly modern. Evil, he may reason, is part of the very nature of our lives, arising from our appetites, the shortness of life, the limits on supplies, and so forth. To comfort himself he will adopt a sort of practical Manichaeism that allows him to see good and evil involved in constant struggle—the balance may tip one way or the other for a time but neither force can overwhelm the other. He will take the stance of philosophic conservatism, telling himself, A man who isn't a liberal at 20 doesn't have a heart, and a man who isn't a conservative at 40 doesn't have a brain. The chances are that such a vision will sponsor a restraint that is commendable in all but extremely limited crisis situations, the situations in which men perish or survive.

A second choice is to hold that the evils of a given moment are greater than can be as-

sumed solely from the weakness of human nature and the ways of the world—and so must proceed from a system, social or political. Revolution is the logical choice for a man of conscience in such a case (of course, the large numbers of people who bury their heads in the sand, whatever their convictions, have already assumed the proper position for execution).

The third choice, that of leaving the country, is based on the realization that a given situation has passed the point of no return and has to run its course. The decision to flee is never a happy one, and the courage of men like Amalrik is as admirable as it is rare (but, it should also be noted, Amalrik views the present regime in the U.S.S.R. as “senile” and thus considers it less dangerous than others, like Kuznetsov, might).

LOOKING BACK over the past 50 years we see that the decision to leave was, at certain times, the proper one for anyone wishing to remain alive. Those who stayed in Germany after a certain point did not slow the war machine and some who did flee the Nazis were able to help in the struggle against them. The same may be said of other places, other struggles—one only has to think for a moment how many of the outstanding scientists and artists of the 20th century spent a portion of their lives in voluntary exile. For those people who escaped in time there was a critical period in which the danger grew increasingly obvious, the battle between the instinct to flee and the strength of one’s roots grew sharper; and then that critical period was over, the borders were closed, passports no longer issued, trains inspected by the secret police.

It must be admitted that the question under examination here is a rather specialized one, since the lives of most people are still so fixed and limited by economic poverty and/or poverty of the imagination that such things are simply beyond their scope. A poor Jew living in Galicia, with a half dozen children and only the foggiest idea of what was trans-

piring in distant capitals, had little chance of altering his fate any more than the tribes of America, hunting and fishing in unimaginable oblivion, could have had any idea of what was to wipe them from the face of the earth. Yet though the question is limited, it can force our attention to potentially valuable areas.

WHAT, THEN, are the indicators in the world around us that signal the coming of madness and catastrophe? Let us choose one example and follow it through. The resurgence of interest in mysticism, the occult, and Eastern religions may well not be a good omen for our civilization. This is not meant as an intrinsic criticism of any of the philosophic orientations, such as Zen, Buddhism, astrology, theosophy, which all have become household words in our time—but it is distressing when large numbers of people reject the basic images their civilization has fashioned to give them a picture of life, time, and death. Popularity is the key factor here since, for us, a fascination with the East is as natural as a German’s with Italy. Only when such a phenomenon attains a great currency does it signal more than a passing craze.

First, a word must be said about the moods of civilizations at different phases of their development. America in the 19th century was young and strong; there was space and opportunity and no serious obstacle between the thrust of the civilization and the Pacific Ocean. Thus there were objective conditions for a sense of rising power and great expectations, which even the Civil War did not undermine. The poet of that epoch, Walt Whitman, put that spirit into long, powerful lines forming a cheerful Bible of self-confident energy.

When a great historical enterprise is coming to its conclusion, no Whitmans appear. If we take the example of Russia in the years before 1917, we find that the chief writers of that brilliant generation shared a prophetic and tragic sense of things to come (though they were mostly wrong in the particulars)

that is diametrically opposed to Whitman's. The difference lies in a relationship to time and the course of events which is almost physical. For Whitman and his contemporaries time was copious, spacious, whereas the Russians felt overwhelmed by the lateness of the hour and the crush of events. Alexander Blok, the greatest poet of that era, claimed he could literally hear the world crumbling and ripping around him. When he chose to portray the coming cataclysm it was always in terms of immense releases of energy and his metaphors were the great natural forces, volcanoes, blizzards; for him, man was a tiny and powerless creature when confronted with powers of such magnitudes, whose dreams were "the dreams of an ant."

Everyday life and religious mysticism are very difficult to reconcile, and the usual result is something on the order of businessmen's optimism, a watered-down Calvinism without metaphysical depth. In normal times these two factors work out the compromises known as morality and hypocrisy, but in abnormal times the split becomes pronounced, and the idea of personal salvation becomes increasingly attractive in proportion to the sense that the times are disastrously out of joint. Most of the mysticism that arises in such cases is feverish and not genuine, a nepenthe for weak spirits. Before the Russian Revolution mysticism flourished in Russia (Rasputin, Gurdjieff, Madame Blavatsky), and drug use, particularly cocaine, was also widespread. So it would seem that the sudden appearance of popular mysticism indicates a slackening of interest in the world of daily affairs that arises from a feeling of helplessness in directing them. Whether the appearance of large numbers of saffron robes is indicative of the coming demise of a social order is an open question, but linked with other phenomena it becomes a cause for greater concern.

It is not difficult to link popular mysticism and assassination or sudden increase in murders, though the link is not a causal one. In both cases the internal structure of laws,

morality, and ideals created within an individual by his culture begins to weaken; a certain impatience results, whether for understanding and salvation or the satisfaction of hostility. A sense of chaos and lateness stokes the hunger for immediate gratification. The Nazi mystique offered the impatient man the security of merging with the warm, organic collective while at the same time slaking his angers with legal murder.

If a society is approaching some critical passage one would not expect its sexual morality to become more severe and puritan, unless the danger could be isolated and people could unite against it. Though our civilization may be sexually neurotic and though the struggle against superstition in this area is a worthy cause, we should not let ourselves be deceived. In our age the most atrocious acts are carried out by men carrying banners with lofty words and noble images. In fact, this has become somewhat obligatory. The new sexuality has its dark side, which is not shown in ads or movies that appeal to the fantasies of the viewer. A law of distortion operates in all social movements, and the new idea grows increasingly warped as it penetrates the minds of people unable to deal with it or willing only to exploit it. The sexuality we have been denied, or have denied ourselves, was not simply "free" sexuality, but one connected with our thwarted humanity and one that cannot be experienced except with a greater sense of our humanity. Thus, three elements indicate the coming of bad times—chaos in religion; aggression; sexuality. Charles Manson was such an enthralling figure to lost souls because he combined in himself these three forces in a darkly powerful trinity.

Unfortunately, a society cannot deal with such problems through legislation, because these are phenomena that arise when legal and moral powers are no longer deeply respected. Any solutions to them must come about as they have in the past, by wars, revolutions, the building of new societies, the creation of new religions.

That art in recent times has taken a nose dive is no great secret. The novel has been pronounced dead as many times as God. Both are probably in the sleep between incarnations. The public has new sources of information, instruction, and entertainment, and art, to its own disadvantage, must compete in the market for attention. Many writers and painters long for a society in which their work is valued and appreciated and throw half-envying glances at the Soviet Union where artists are at least taken seriously enough to be punished. A feeling of despair has crept in because art seems powerless to help man by revealing to him the secret designs of his nature and fate.

This is what was disturbing George Grosz when, in his autobiography, *A Little Yes and A Big No*, he wrote:

The best thing for art is for it to be treated as a hobby, an incidental thing. For, after all, what do we artists, we insignificant little ants, have to say? We, who are nothing more than puffed-up frogs? Where is our influence? Where our significance? Do we change the general picture in the slightest? My faith has been shattered.

Grosz was a man who fled in time. His life and art will be treated here as one thing in an effort to find in the man's total experience some clues to the relationship of the individual to the collective in a time of great stress. He was born July 26, 1893, in Berlin, the son of Prussian Lutherans. His earliest years were spent in Berlin and Stolp, a small town in Pomerania. His father died when Grosz was seven; Grosz himself distrusted self-psychoanalysis and spent very little time analyzing his relationship with his parents in his autobiography. That type of thinking was, in any case, alien to him, and he was more concerned with showing the reader the development of his visual imagination. He chose wisely. His career as an artist and his subsequent fate were very deeply connected to his initial, conscious visual impressions. He was the sort of child who could

pour over illustrated magazine for hours, fall entranced before a label on a cocoa can, lose himself completely in the details of historical paintings. Such a predisposition has as much effect on a man as a tyrannical father or sheltering mother. But there was a further twist to Grosz's fascination—the horrible, the bloody, the macabre exerted a special power over him.

Toward the end of his life he recalled:

A deep indelible impression was made on me by the tremendously alluring horror panorama-painting at the fairs and rifle-match fetes. . . . All that we have experienced today as gruesome reality seems to have been anticipated in these horror pictures . . . the violence inherent in these pictures seemed to forecast race and class hatred, concentration camps and mass murder.

[And he wondered:] Since I can describe these horror scenes and their effect so minutely, they must have influenced my later life and maturity. . . . Was I specially selected to experience horror?

He treats the rest of his childhood quite cursorily except for the chapter entitled "The Vision." Here he describes an initiation into the mysteries of sex, but a purely visual one. Sneaking up to a friend's bedroom window, he accidentally caught sight of that friend's aunt undressing. In great detail, after the space of many years, he describes her every movement and article of clothing as well as his own sensations of terror and rapture. This was the second visual revelation for Grosz and there were to be no others. He describes it in the same mystical, portentous manner as he did the horror-panoramas: "It is as if someone—I do not know who—had showed me an allegory, showed me something eternal . . . woman as the source and continuity of our species forever and ever."

After several useful but dreary years in art academies, Grosz discovered the wild Expressionist paintings of Emil Nolde which opened up a new world to him, one very much like the world within him. Grosz, however, had learned his lessons well and always

preferred careful craftsmanship and precisely constructed designs to chaotic outpourings of emotion. At this time of his life Grosz constituted something of a triple exposure. All young artists were bohemians for economic reasons and Grosz enjoyed wearing the costume. Behind the slouch-hat facade there was a sensible, industrious young man who despised neither money nor middle-class values. But at the very center of that personality was a core of vivid horror, the sun around which Grosz the bohemian and Grosz the good German revolved. Life's beauty, symbolized by the woman in his vision, was never completely eclipsed in his psyche, but only rarely did it shine into his consciousness and art.

WE SHOULD NOT OVERDO the image of Grosz as seer. Even in retrospect he admitted that he had only the faintest glimmerings of what was to come, and none at all on the eve of World War I. "Those who were not enjoying life craved war. I was not one of them." Yet when war was declared he fell victim to the mass hysteria and volunteered. Life as an infantryman quickly replaced whatever illusions he might have had with a loathing of mankind he was never able to shake. He did not see much if any combat and, like Brecht, was to learn the horrors of war in hospitals. In 1916 he was honorably discharged, suffering from brain fever and dysentery, and subject to recall.

The Berlin to which Grosz returned was a bizarre city. Vast, gloomy, deserted, at night it would suddenly spring to life in its subterranean bars and cellars. Grosz lived a solitary life, like a Steppenwolf, painting the world around him with "utter contempt":

I drew drunkards; puking men; men with clenched fists cursing the moon; men who had murdered women, sitting on their coffins playing skat. . . . I drew soldiers without noses; war cripples with crustacean-like steel arms. . . .

In 1917 he was recalled, but this time

there was no hysteria to numb his response to war. He was found semiconscious, partially buried in a dung pit, and was to be shot as a deserter. Through the intervention of influential admirers of his art, he was placed in an asylum for "war-crazed, shell-shocked, and insane soldiers." The hospital, where they were fed "dried vegetables, turnip coffee and synthetic honey which corroded the stomach lining," was a modern hell, located not in remote metaphysical space but here on earth, at once boring and excruciating. Though Grosz was to have some Marxist leanings later on, they could not have gone very deep, for his faith in the common man had been devastated. "I expect exactly nothing from the people."

When the war was over Grosz felt only disappointment "because the people had tolerated it and suffered it for so long a time, refusing to follow the few voices that were raised against the mass slaughter." He was disturbed by the sense that though people had stopped killing each other, the war had not really ended. No matter what movements, artistic or political, he joined in the interlude between the wars, Grosz's painting was never free of the recent horror reaching out to touch the worse horror to come.

Anyone wishing to taste the flavor of life in Berlin right after the war, and on into the '20s, could find few better firsthand accounts than Grosz's autobiography:

Barbarism prevailed. The streets became dangerous and were markets for prostitution, murder, and cocaine deals. Little leaders of diverse political groups lorded over their courts, their scepters the bloody legs of a broken chair. . . . Guns and shells could be purchased practically anywhere. My cousin, who had been released from the army later than I, brought me a machine gun one day. He thought I might pay for it on installments. . . . Morality as such no longer existed.

Grosz became a Dadaist. Though he probably didn't share the zaniness of his fellow Dadaists, their mutual contempt for the cul-

ture that had flowered into war provided a bond. Grosz was the official “propagandada” of the group, inventing slogans like “*Dada über alles*” and “Dada kicks you in the behind and you like it,” which were printed up in sticker form and pasted all over Berlin, and on the coats of passing waiters as well. Dada was many things: a concoction of cynicism and grief, a way to enjoy and exploit emptiness, laughter at the funeral of an age. As a movement it couldn’t last long—the serious men moved on to other things, and the crackpots retired to Swiss farms to pursue their wistful lunacies in peace. Besides, something new was in the air, something very bad, and that was what always drew Grosz’s attention.

Grosz’s famous collection of drawings *Ecce Homo* is a visual history of the German ’20s, a vision that penetrated the surface and saw what was being prepared in the hearts of men. Grosz wrote: “The world of the 1920s was like a boiling cauldron. We did not see those who fed the flames. However, we did feel the growing heat and watched the violent seething.”

A great deal of what Grosz produced in the ’20s is social art, though there is no denying its completely personal quality. It has been said of Kafka that because his neuroses and private obsessions coincided with realities to come he was a prophet instead of just an interestingly haunted man of letters. Much the same is true of Grosz: stimulated by the hellishness of German society, the spellbinding images of horror he had absorbed as a child now began to shape his art. Grosz’s style has the familiar, primitive ugliness of the sexual drawings found on the walls of public lavatories. Many of his drawings appear done by a child, a child disturbed by having seen too much of what is bad in the world. Murder was a favorite topic, especially sex murders. *Sex Murder on Ackerstrasse* shows the headless torso of a woman on a bed while the murderer hurriedly washes his hands, a demented look on his face. But when Grosz really wished to

horrify, he did not draw murderers in the act, or immediately after, but rather chose to show them in their everyday lives, crossing the street, having a drink, as murderers do.

Unlike the Cubists, from whom he learned much, Grosz was not merely interested in the destruction of traditional modes of perception; he took their technique of viewing an object from many sides at once and used it in his street scenes to express his vision of collective insanity. The effect he achieves is that of the kaleidoscopic simultaneity peculiar to public places. Unlike places where men gather for specific purposes, the streets of big cities have something dreamlike about them, an unconscious flow that often makes people forget themselves, curse aloud, sing, talk to themselves. The depiction of the life of the street is the closest one can come to depicting the collective without resorting to symbolic methods. Everyone must cross the street and in Grosz’s drawings and paintings they all cross at once—corrupt bankers, murderers on the way home, whores flashing their hard cunts at men with twisted hands; in an alley a quick execution is taking place. When Jung speaks of the collective it sounds arcane, when Grosz draws a few people passing on different levels of the same street we get a real glimpse of what it’s all about.

Henry Miller said of Grosz: “For his violent colors he blended arsenic, vitriol, cyanide of potassium with an admixture of vomit, shit, sweat and tears.” There is a range of colors inherently repulsive to the human eye—the colors of rotten meat, dried blood, unhealthy skin—and these make up Grosz’s palette. These are archetypal colors which arise from the organic processes of life—here, specifically, the processes of sickness and decay. Theories of history describing the rise and fall of nations with metaphors of health, sickness, senility, and death are no longer fashionable since they are difficult to support with rigorous logic and documentation. Still, they have great appeal to the imagination and to our common sense.

Grosz, himself no theoretician, kept his art and himself alive by trusting his eyes and his instincts, and rejecting comfortable illusions or sophisticated justifications.

Explanations of Nazism have ranged over an incredible spectrum. A recent popular book connected Berlin with black magic cults in Tibet, and there are, of course, scores of more sober attempts. Locating the roots of fascism in thwarted sexuality, à la Wilhelm Reich, would find abundant support in Grosz's work. His streets and bedrooms are full of negative sexuality. Sex murders attracted his brush more than once in a period when hatred had replaced love as the emotional accompaniment of sex, and it must have been very painful for Grosz, whose image of life's beauty was a woman's body, to draw those dirty nipples and dead cunts.

Grosz was no mystic, he gently mocked the occult in several places in his autobiography, and yet he always felt that some "Power" guided him at the crucial moments of his life. There were also warnings. In 1932 he visited his old friend Daubler who had discovered him and who was now in a sanatorium near Berlin. Daubler told him: "When you walked in I saw something above your head. It was rather faint but . . . there is no doubt about it being a rope and an axe. Please give me your word that you will leave Germany at once. . . ."

A few months later Grosz's studio was raided by the police. By then he was in America. Many things caused him to leave, and in particular, an invitation from the Art Students League of New York. The invitation was good luck yet it might not have been accepted but for the dream. The dream, as he retells it, is too long to reproduce or thoroughly examine here. Like all dreams a combination of personal, cultural, and universal symbols, it is shot through with enormous anxiety and takes place in dark streets, passageways, cellars. It was especially fitting that most of the action should happen in the street, Grosz's symbol of the collective. The streets were sticky, covered

with glue. "Outrageous that such a condition should be tolerated by the authorities," thought Grosz in the dream but, of course, the authorities wanted their enemies stuck in Germany, the easier to do away with them. Finally, after many twists and turns of the nightmare, a little man dressed as a diplomat shouts to Grosz: "Hurry up before the stench gets worse," then asks, "Why don't you go to America?"

The next morning, after Grosz told his wife the dream, a cablegram arrived from America inviting him to spend the summer at the Art Students League. And that is how George Grosz got to America.

There is something ironic and pathetic about Grosz's years in America. For a while he kept his art alive by dredging up images from his memory, but what he desired from America was nothing less than a rebirth into middle-class innocence. To draw like Norman Rockwell was his ambition, to live like Rockwell's characters his secret hope. By emigrating Grosz had made himself neurotic. In Germany he had been a prophetic genius because the horrors lodged in his visual memory were touched and stimulated by the events around him, but though America was having bad times, its problems were of a very different order than Germany's and the country seemed blessedly normal to Grosz. Perhaps Grosz found some happiness in America, or at least some comfort and peace. But he took to drink, and there was always a great restlessness in him, and when it tinges his paintings of nudes and landscapes they are the better for it. In 1959 he returned to Germany and died of a heart attack a few months later. He lay in a hallway until someone found him.

III
In our time the minimal model of the human psyche must take account of aggression, sexuality, and the need for meaning, a less distinct but equally demanding category. Civilizations and societies are, after all, as much devices for structuring human psy-

Partisan Review

2

SPRING 1972 \$1.50 12s. 6d.

STEPHEN SPENDER America
HERBERT MARCUSE Art and Revolution
PETER BROOKS Melodramatic Imagination
VASIL BYKOV Writing in Byelorussia
Stories by
MARIA LEHMANN • JOYCE CAROL OATES
RONALD SUKENICK
and
BUS, John Goode, Andrew McLaughlin, Alicia
Ostriker, James Tate

On the stands now • Or write

Partisan Review

Rutgers, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

- ☐ Enter my subscription
☐ Extend my current subscription
for ☐ \$5.50/1 year ☐ \$10.50/2 years
* ☐ \$4.50/2 years ☐ \$8.50/2 years
Send me my free issue
☐ My check is enclosed ☐ Please bill me

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

* Special Student Rate

I am a student at: _____

Partisan Review

SUMMER 1972
\$1.50 ...
on the stands now.

\$5.50/year

chological energies as they are instruments for the production and distribution of goods and services. Every society gives form to those three basic currents of human energy, those needs, thereby forming the psychic underpinning of society. When disturbances appear in all three areas at once it is hard to escape the conclusion that the society is in for serious trouble. What precisely such signals indicate is hard to tell and may just as well be a symptom of an internal rearrangement of priorities, values, and directions as the harbinger of convulsion. Many other factors will influence any given outcome; some people die of diseases from which others recover.

Grosz escaped with his life because obsessions reaching back to his childhood forced his attention onto the violence, morbid sexuality, and feverish mysticism around him. His decision to flee came in the most intuitive way, via a dream, yet it was no fluke. He had been looking in the right places for a long time and looking hard. Perhaps his despair at the uselessness of art was not wholly justified. It kept him in touch with the world around him in a way that contributed to his survival. For modern man, society has replaced nature as his chief danger; bombs and bayonets take more lives than floods and tigers ever did. If man cannot greatly alter the proportion of evil in the world, he must develop a new set of instincts as sharp as those he once used for surviving in the jungle. As always, the trick is to know where and when to look for signs, and how to read them. Art like Grosz's can serve as an early warning system, a means for studying the collective, and a stop on which to hone new instincts. The signs will be there for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

My intention has been to explore and I don't wish to draw any conclusions more definite than these. I feel that I am standing on the rim of a vast ignorance, armed with only a simple question and a single example. But, for a start, that may be enough. ☐

Bogdan Denitch

Heresies in European Communism

It now is a fact taken for granted that there are a variety of Communist regimes pursuing ever more divergent policies. In that narrow sense, the Titoist heresy has won an irreversible victory. Yet little attention has been paid to a parallel development among non-ruling Communist parties in Western Europe, which range from those with a plurality of working-class votes, as the CPs in Italy, France, Iceland, and Finland, to the small parties of West Germany, Sweden, Britain, and the Benelux. Even the underground organizations in Spain, Greece, and Portugal, which could have been expected to maintain close ties with Moscow if only to obtain aid, have shown a critical independence unheard-of in the days before the Prague Spring.

The development of the West European Communist parties has already gone past the stage where their independence from Moscow could be taken as a mere strategic maneuver. A party, particularly a mass party, which engages in a given strategy for a prolonged period, finds that the strategy often becomes irreversible. Though attitudes toward the "socialist bloc" countries continued to change throughout the decade, two factors stand out: *they are not held up as a model of what a West European socialism would or should look like, and they are not considered to have authority in matters of theory and practice.* This is not to say, however, that there are no practical bases for a continued alliance—loose to be sure—between parties in the West and the ruling parties in Eastern Europe. To begin with, there is a fair degree of agreement on questions of foreign policy, particularly toward

the United States. NATO and the U.S. presence in Western Europe are viewed not only as potential threats to peace but also as possible *internal* threats. When there is talk about a "Greek solution" in Italy, for example, it gains a certain credibility only if one assumes NATO and U.S. backing for a military putsch that would block a peaceful road to power for Italian Communists. A similar thought is on the minds of the Spanish Communists when they consider the possibilities of post-Franco politics. A détente or a weakening of the system of military alliances in the West (and East) would have a major effect in opening up possibilities for Communist participation in coalition governments. Any consequent liberalization in Eastern Europe would also have positive effects for the West European Communists—as they have repeatedly stated.

A stable evolution of the West European parties has been under way for a decade, characterized by increasing independence from Moscow and its supporters (insofar as *they* remain a bloc) and gradual emergence from political isolation and exile at home. The two processes are interdependent and add up to the evolution of the Communist parties into something resembling traditional Social Democratic parties of the period preceding the split in the world socialist movement.

The process has gone farthest in the CP of Iceland, which is no longer even invited to conferences of the West European parties. For all practical purposes it is a left-wing social democratic party participating in a coalition government.

The Dutch Party, to be sure, is invited to

conferences such as the most recent one in January 1970 in London, but it insisted at this conference, as it has since 1964, that no joint statement be issued and that the sessions serve a purely consultative function. The London conference issued a statement representing a minimal consensus denouncing the trials in Leningrad, repression of strikers in Poland, anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, and reiterating opposition to the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia was the Great Divide. Even the statements of the Czechoslovak leadership in January 1970 defending the Russian intervention did not prevent further statements by the British, French, Italian, Belgian, and Swedish parties, maintaining their support for Dubcek and their opposition to the invasion. The only Party supporting the Russians was that of Luxembourg, while in the other parties the pro-Russian line was pushed by minorities increasingly isolated and usually composed of older and less active members. This development places the question of joint electoral and union activity between the Socialists and Communists in a new framework, since the traditional objection to the Communist parties as basically appendages of Moscow is now open to question.

The most successful CP in Western Europe is the Italian, which in its internal makeup resembles the classic Social Democratic party before World War I. It has the same complex network of cooperatives, unions, credit unions, cultural organizations, and other party-run institutions that gave the old German and Austrian Social Democrats their almost unshakable hold on the mass of the working class. The Italian Party never suffered the degree of isolation endured by its sister parties. Even in the worst days of the Cold War, it was firmly entrenched in Italian political life through its control of the largest trade union federation and numerous city and regional governments. Its block of deputies in the national parliament has become indispensable for any Left-Center coalition, and this strategic position is, if anything, strengthened by the growing polarization of Italian society. If the neofascist MSI grows in political strength, the Christian Democrats will have to seek an opening to the Left by creating a coalition government tolerable to the PCI; otherwise they must form a bloc with

the monarchists and neofascists, precipitating a near-civil-war situation.

The movement toward unification of the Italian labor movement, where the Catholic trade unions have taken the major initiative, shows one possible form of the coalition: Socialists, Social Democrats, Communists, and Left-Catholics. The Italian Communists, however, fear that in such a coalition they would be the strongest partner and would have a great deal to lose if the coalition fails to carry out a wide-ranging program of domestic reforms.

The minor CPs of Britain, Belgium, Sweden, Holland, and West Germany are not faced with these problems since they have opted for the role of ginger groups, presenting themselves as Left critics of the Labor and Social Democratic parties. Their importance will probably increase in Sweden and Germany, because of the disintegration of the New Left and Maoist sects. In their new metamorphosis the Communist parties will have the advantage of organization and stability, and thus attract some of the new young activists who are too radical to go into the Socialist parties yet increasingly perceive the New Left groups as a dead end.

In Germany the Communist youth organization, the Spartakists, has already replaced the remnants of the SDS and anarchists as the major Left force among the students. This new generation of Communist activists no longer holds the East European and Russian regimes as models of socialism and does not bear the burden of years of apology for the crimes of Stalinism and the Communist regimes. Thus, the Swedish Party explicitly states its commitment to political democracy and a multiparty approach to socialism. The Dutch and the Italians publish the Russian dissidents, and even the French CP—the most conservative of all—has been increasingly critical of the realities of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The traditional attack on the Communists from the Left—that they were willing to subordinate the struggles of their own working classes to the needs of the Soviet Union—no longer seems persuasive. One can polemicize with the mechanical, bureaucratic, and intellectually sterile Communist party of France,

but it has to be in terms of its own program and activities.

BUT THERE ARE LIMITS to how far the various CPs of Western Europe can go in denouncing Soviet reality. While these limits vary from country to country, the constant threat of a Russian-provoked split slows down the process of independence—though it has progressed much farther than most people realize. For example, after the Spanish underground Party had repeatedly denounced the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the pro-Russian members of the Spanish Central Committee (in exile in France) sought a showdown. The result was expulsion of the pro-Russian wing and the setting up of a Russian-financed and -supported center. The pro-Russian group even publishes a paper—*Mundo Obrero*—using the same name as that of the underground Party paper—in which the leaders of the underground Party are denounced *by name*.

The Spanish CP is particularly interesting because it has repeatedly attacked abrogations of democratic rights in Communist countries. It has also been successful in establishing a united front of Communists, Socialists, Left-Catholics, and even anarchists, and by all accounts has practically taken over the state-established trade unions. Within Spain the industrial managers often protect local Communist trade union militants, since these illegal trade union leaders are the only ones with whom they can reach an agreement that has any meaning.

The case of the Greek Communist underground is less well-known, but there also a split was provoked by the Russians. The larger and more powerful wing of the Greek underground is now in the hands of national Communists who derive much support from the Italian CP. The Greek Exile Center in Prague was physically taken over after the Soviet invasion and a new leadership installed. But the larger underground organizations have broken off contact with the Center and maintain ties with the independent exiles in Italy and France.

While the Communist parties are now bedeviled by internal oppositions attacking the leadership for moving too slowly toward independence, it is important to remember that these oppositions no longer can be reduced to a pariah existence if they are expelled. Even

in France, several opposition groups in and out of the Party maintain regular publications and have an impact on the thinking and activity of the Party ranks.

In Italy, the various wings of the Party are by now sufficiently differentiated so that elections for the Central Committee recognize the existence of various tendencies and the branches discuss alternate programs in electing delegates to the Conference. The theoretical press of the Party for years has published non-Communist leftists and the Party publishing house is a major publisher of the East European and Soviet dissidents.

To be sure, a major left-wing current organized around *Il Manifesto* has been excluded from the Italian CP; but this was as much a reflection of the Party's domestic needs as of the increasing probability that a pro-Russian wing would be financed and supported by Moscow if the *Manifesto* group maintained its existence within the Party. The *Manifesto* seeks to address the groups to the Left of the Party and has developed a sharp and cogent critique of the East European regimes. The group bluntly denies that those regimes are socialists, affirms the existence of class struggle in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., and calls for revolutionary activity against the ruling bureaucracies.

The situation in which the Communist dissidents find themselves is not analogous to that of previous oppositions, for the parties now are less monolithic than they have been in the past. This creates a situation in which an opposition outside the Party is merely the periphery of a spectrum that encompasses substantial forces within the parties. Expulsion therefore is no longer a surgical operation—for the internal life of the parties is becoming increasingly subject to debate and political conflict, and in a number of cases outside opposition has helped alter a Party policy.

What unites these opposition groups is their feeling that new strata have been activated through the student movement and that educated younger workers have appeared in the trade unions who are not reachable by the more traditional Left appeals. They see a public developing to the Left of the organized workers' parties, which can be brought into the political process through a renewed political offensive and a stress on trade union spontaneity.

A second major theme uniting the oppositions is their stress on workers' control. In varying degrees they lean upon the Yugoslav experience, but seek to develop workers' councils in a far more radical framework than that of the Yugoslavs.

The trend in the Communist parties of Western Europe appears, then, to be toward greater independence. This trend, I believe, is strong and irreversible. As the tendency toward independence becomes more marked, pressure on the Socialist and Labor parties to reevaluate their attitude toward working with Communists clearly will increase. It is my view that at least in Italy no conceivable development toward socialism will be possible that would exclude the PCI. The choice for Italian democratic socialists of developing a broad Left coalition that includes the CPI is of course risky; but it is a choice that will have to be made if the growing polarization of Italian society is not to result in a resurgence of the Right. Here we touch on extremely complex problems, beyond the level of a brief report—problems to which we shall have to return. □

Andrew M. Greeley

War, Morality & Error

When I was growing up during World War II, my slightly older friends returning from the military kept saying, "If we win this damned thing the only reason will be that the other side makes more mistakes than we do." Reading Liddell Hart's *History of the Second World War* in an accidental but bizarre counterpoint to the Pentagon Papers, I am forced to conclude that that judgment could be made not only about World War II but about most human history. Plowing through Liddell Hart and the Bantam Books edition of the unabridged *New York Times* excerpts from the Pentagon Papers simultaneously is not an experience

calculated to give one much confidence in the human race.*

In Hart's view, World War II was unnecessarily begun and unnecessarily prolonged. Most of the great victories that occurred were more the result of mistakes of the losing side than the genius of the winning side. Some of the most notable Allied triumphs, for example, were caused by previous Allied defeats that enticed Hitler to overextend himself. Had it not been for the failure of the first Tunisian campaign, the Germans would not have poured massive troops into the second Tunisian campaign and would then have been able to put up a much more vigorous fight in Sicily.

Winston Churchill emerges as a blunderer. His ill-conceived campaign in Greece caused the English to lose the advantages they had gained in the western desert, and the long series of disasters in the desert were responsible, in turn, for the fall of Singapore as Churchill poured vast quantities of personnel and resources into each new blunder in the desert.

The casualties and destruction caused by stupidity on both sides were immense and disasters like Hiroshima and Dresden are ample evidence that even in a war in which one side is engaged in legitimate self-defense, folly can lead to the worst kinds of immorality. A side that produced a "Bomber" Harris might hesitate to be terribly critical of an Adolph Eichmann.

The men who inhabit the Pentagon Papers are remarkably like those who inhabit the allied side in Liddell Hart's *History*. They are guilty of immense folly, a folly that is as easy for us to recognize from hindsight as it was difficult for them to recognize it at the time. Men make a mess out of things; not only evil and malicious men, but also good and well-intentioned men; not only such men of limited intelligence as General Westmoreland and "Bomber" Harris, but men with considerable intelligence, such as Dean Rusk and Walt W. Rostow. The human race is not very good at arranging its behavior, and when it comes to such matters as foreign policy and war, the historical lesson is that it always makes bad things worse. The blindness, ignorance, stupid-

* When the author refers to the Pentagon Papers as a whole, not specifically to the Bantam Books edition, we do not use italics.—Ed.

ity, folly, arrogance, narrowness, rigidity, and inflexibility that led to Vietnam did not come into the world in 1950. These qualities were present in abundance during World War II and probably in every previous war in which men have engaged.

The appalling thought is that there is no real way to guarantee that it won't happen all over again.

For what have we learned from the Pentagon Papers that we did not already know? I do not mean, of course, there are not *facts* that the Papers reveal to us which were previously known only to a very few Americans. I do mean that the *lessons* of the Vietnam War were all known before the war and they did not prevent us from getting into it. If we had not learned the lessons by 1960, what reason is there to think that we had learned them by 1970? How can we prevent the same things from happening all over again?

It might be said that we have learned not to lie to the people, but there is little reason to think that if all the secret decisions had been revealed when they were made, there would have been much difference in the public attitude toward the war. Even if Lyndon Johnson had announced before November 1964 that the war in Vietnam might have to be expanded, he still would have beaten Barry Goldwater. Public disillusionment with the war is based on the fact that it went on too long and involved too heavy a price for something that did not seem worth it. Will any public in the world be moved by arguments more sophisticated than that? It is not good to lie to the people; dishonesty—be it that of Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940s or of more recent administrations in the 1960s—destroys the credibility of a government. Long before Daniel Ellsberg's arrival on the scene, the American people did not believe they were being told the truth about the war. But if all the Pentagon Papers had been released to the public as they were written, it is unlikely that the slow but implacable pace of public disenchantment with the war would have been much accelerated.

A second lesson may be that the American government should never get into long-term, limited wars in faraway places where the casualty rates will be high and the national interest not obvious. A good rule; Harry Truman would

undoubtedly endorse it. But scarcely a decade after we ought to have learned this definitively in Korea, we seem to have had to learn it all over again. Dean Rusk in a TV interview lamented that the war did not have the kind of public support necessary to get it through to a successful conclusion, but what in the world made Mr. Rusk think such a war could sustain public support for very long? We have learned the lesson of Korea all over again and maybe twice in a quarter-century is enough to make the lesson stick; but men's capacity to learn from their past mistakes seems to be tragically limited.

Or, it may be urged, more attention should be paid to questions of morality in determining public policy issues but, as Daniel Patrick Moynihan has observed, defending democracy in Southeast Asia is, or can be seen as, an exquisitely moral stance. It may not be my or your moral stance, but it is a moral stance. Few people are explicitly immoral. Harry Truman justified the bomb on Hiroshima in terms of the American and Japanese lives it would save, compared to the lives that would have been lost if an invasion of Japan had been necessary. We may not like such a moral justification but the problem about falling back on moral argumentation is that one man's morality is another man's madness. Those who directed the war in Southeast Asia, it will be said, had little concern for human life, but they would surely reply that they had immense concern for human life, that they were convinced it was necessary for the United States to take the stand it did so that many millions of human lives would not subsequently be blotted out. One fights a limited war, the argument goes, in order to avoid a total war. I am not saying I accept this argument or agree with its morality, but I am saying that while concern for morality and respect for human life are admirable, they do not automatically dictate policy decisions. It is not hard to find moral rationalizations for almost any policy decision but even beyond such cynicism, men of sincerity, integrity, and good will can disagree endlessly on what moral policy is. We have had few secretaries of state more moral than John Foster Dulles, and as the Pentagon Papers make clear, he was of decisive importance in beginning America's post-Geneva involvement in Vietnam.

IT IS FREQUENTLY ASSERTED the United States did not have a clearly thought-out foreign policy, but the Pentagon Papers make it clear that we did. It was called "containment" when George Kennan first enunciated it in the 1940s and it came to be known as "collective security" and, more recently, as the "domino" theory. It was a vigorous, consistent, well thought-out policy and in many respects a successful one. Western Europe was preserved, the expansion of the Soviet empire prevented, and the slow breakup of Communist unity may very well have been facilitated by the check to Russian ambitions that "containment" created. I do not wish to get here into a detailed argument about post-World War II foreign policy, particularly in Europe. I simply want to assert that the policy was viewed as successful by most sections of the American public and even by most liberal intellectuals. One wonders why the *New York Times* does not reprint some of its own editorials in the late '50s and early '60s. Would we find in them any more serious questioning of "the collective security" approach than in the Pentagon Papers? This is less to criticize the *Times* than to suggest that we did indeed have a policy, and a policy that was endorsed by just about everyone. In retrospect, we stuck to this policy too long, and applied it to both times and circumstances where it was not only not pertinent but devilishly dangerous. That, of course, is the problem with policies. You never know when to abandon them, and the record of the human race generally forces us to the conclusion that policies are almost always abandoned when it is too late.

It might be suggested that what we need is more intelligent men in government. Surely no one can read the Pentagon Papers with the perspective of hindsight and not conclude that there was a vast amount of stupidity in our government during the 1950s and 1960s; yet, the level of intelligence, both academic and administrative, during the Kennedy and Johnson years was probably higher than it had ever been before in the nation's history. Was there ever a time when there were more Ph.D.s in the government or more men who could claim to be intellectuals? If there is any lesson to be learned at all about intellectuals in

government from the Pentagon Papers, it maybe that it is probably a good thing to keep them out of government.

I don't really believe that, but I wonder whether that astute domestic politician, Lyndon Johnson, would have proceeded down the path to disaster if he had not felt intellectually inferior to the brilliant Ph.D.s from Harvard who were advising him on foreign policy. Political shrewdness might have been more appropriate than intellectual brilliance and systems analysis.

Perhaps we will solve the problem if we build into the government guarantees that there are men who will say "no." But the Pentagon Papers make clear that there were "no" men all along the way. General Taylor did not like "search and destroy." George Ball opposed involvement in the war. Roger Hillsman opposed its escalation. Even McNamara and MacNamara came eventually to disagree, but they had sold the President on a policy and the policy was now being carried out against their wishes. It was not for lack of hearing the opposite side of the question that the Vietnam tragedy came into being. At one point, it seems, the President may have stopped listening to everyone but the military, but apparently that period did not last very long. What was lacking was a man of the kind of influence in the administration that Robert Kennedy had in the prior one, a man who could have said in 1965 the equivalent of Kennedy's famous "You're not going to make my brother the General Tojo of the 1960s." That sort of political shrewdness and historical perspective combined with a very high position in the decision-making structure is probably an accident, and such an accident is a very thin reed on which to build our hopes for the avoidance of more tragedy.

It is clear now that we should not have become involved in the Vietnam war. One must simply add that such clarity was enjoyed by very few people seven years ago. We will not make the Vietnam mistake again. But given the folly of man, the complexity of the human condition, and the ever more sophisticated power of self-destruction available to us, do we have any reason to believe that we will not make other mistakes that will be equally bad? It is my melancholy conclusion after read-

ing the Pentagon Papers that there is little reason to be hopeful about our capacity to avoid other equally serious tragedies in the future.

Yet there are many people who are confident on this subject. One hears no more self-doubt from the critics of the men responsible for the documents collected in the Pentagon Papers than one can find in the documents themselves. I was against the war in 1965, though ambivalently so, mostly because I did not see how anybody could pretend to certainty on such a complicated subject. Indeed, I don't see how anybody can get much beyond ambivalence on any of the issues of public policy that face the United States. Yet there seems to be an abundance of men who are very sure of themselves, confident that they know what is to be done, and certain that their wisdom and morality are superior to the wisdom and morality of those who governed in the '60s. I envy such men their certainty. I do not, however, understand how they come by it, for in style, though not substance, it is the same sort of certainty that marked the positions of "Bomber" Harris and W. W. Rostow. Sometimes I am prompted to think that the wisdom of a policy stands in inverse proportion to the certainty of the men who advocate it.

How can those who so eagerly support new American policies in world affairs be so certain that disaster, suffering, and death will not follow from their policies, too? I am not saying that we should not have new policies; it is clear we should. I am simply saying that I am terribly uneasy in the presence of men convinced they know the answers. And I am troubled and confused by the unintended-consequence phenomenon Liddell Hart saw so frequently in World War II. Will future historians see a connection between the Vietnamese war and Nixon's new policy toward China? Will they say that the Vietnamese tragedy was a necessary prelude to an era of peace and perhaps a good relationship between the United States and China? I do not know whether they will say this, it is a possibility, a possibility that does not justify the Vietnamese war but suggests that human affairs are appallingly complicated and confused. A lot of straight lines grow crooked in human

affairs but occasionally it turns out that a crooked line may grow straight.

NOW WE ARE GOING THROUGH an orgy of pinning responsibility on people; but how can we be so sure that we are any less wrong than they were?

One must take a stand, of course, for one cannot be so befuddled by the confusion and complexity of events as to stand paralyzed before them; but we ought to take our stands with the full awareness of the uncertainties, complexities, unintended consequences, good and evil, and the possibilities of mistake that are inherent in the policies we advocate. We must also take our stands with a full awareness that we may be wrong and that those who disagree with us may not only do so in good faith but possess as much wisdom as we do. Perhaps more.

Most political policies fail. The question is, how badly do they fail? What is needed among policy-makers and critics is more self-doubt, not the self-doubt that paralyzes, but the kind that saves us from absolutism. Dean Acheson has spoken contemptuously of John F. Kennedy's indecisiveness at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. From Mr. Acheson's viewpoint it would seem that the only good president is a president who is supremely and serenely confident. A president who speaks about "Pearl Harbor in reverse" is, in Mr. Acheson's judgment, not worthy to lead the country. Without getting into an argument about the Kennedy policy on Vietnam, I will simply assert that if more people—especially those over whose political careers Mr. Acheson presided—displayed such self-doubts the Vietnam crisis might never have become as bad as it did. But if I find the absence of doubt reprehensible in the men who wrote documents in the Pentagon Papers, I also find it reprehensible in their critics. In the final analysis, the human race divides not into Left or Right, liberal or conservative, but into those who see the world as complicated, confused, uncertain and ambiguous, and those who see it as clear and simple. We have had too many of the latter making policy during the 1960s, and we have too many of the same sort criticizing that policy today. These are the men who could destroy us all. □

IN THE MAGAZINES

Orlando Patterson, "On the Fate of Blacks in the Americas," PUBLIC INTEREST, Spring 1972.

Simple slogans of black separatism and black power have faded with incredible speed since the riot-torn 1960s. Black activism is now more political and sophisticated than it was just a short time ago. Yet the assumption of "an underlying unity in the New World black experience" still lies at the heart of much discussion of strategies for black emergence. In his powerful article Orlando Patterson, a black writer and professor of sociology at Harvard University, surveys the historical experiences of blacks in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and concludes that the differences greatly outweigh the similarities. In North America, persons having any trace of black ancestry were lumped together as black by the whites. Consequently, elite sections of the black community were usually forced to identify with the mass of black people. In Latin America, on the other hand, there was an elaborate racial terminology describing and differentiating shades of color, a terminology respected by whites as well as blacks. Here, pressure existed for blacks to increase their status by marrying persons of lighter skin. The result has been to hinder race solidarity, and deprive the black population of leadership.

The West Indies, with an overwhelmingly black population, were different again. Though the superiority of "white" metropolitan culture was accepted by the masses, there were few, if any, white role models. "European values are reinforced, not by the crushing presence of the carriers of the alien 'superior' culture, but mainly by fellow black and brown role models who have mastered the art of performing in accordance with the 'superior' cultural models."

In sum, "while certain critical features of the slave experience were shared by all who suffered it, this experience has little relevance for the present, either as a shared memory binding all the black peoples of the Americas,

or as a sociohistorical continuity shared by them all." While it is true that blacks throughout the New World, in a limited way, share certain common remnants of the original African cultures, "it is precisely these cultural features which have been the first to disappear as a result of modern developments among blacks in the New World."

Patterson sees the 20th-century urbanization of American blacks as crucial to the development of black protest, for only in the city could blacks as a group look inward. Unfortunately, black urbanization occurred at a time when the economy's need for a cheap labor force had diminished. The middle-class black elite has been co-opted into elite roles, but this only accentuates the difficulties of the unskilled black population in the national economy.

Ironically, the ghettoization of the black population led to a de-ethnicizing of black culture just at the time when "blackness" became the rallying cry of the black movement. "At the very point when blacks in the U.S. approach a kind of cultural identity, they cease to be black in any meaningful cultural sense of that term. The culture of poverty, which is a poverty of culture, is fast becoming the lot of all black Americans. . . ." Parallel developments have taken place in the Caribbean.

Looking to the future, Patterson argues that black-power ideology cannot meet the challenge of radically reordering American priorities, so as to rescue blacks from postindustrial redundancy. Only by de-ethnicizing the black movement and moving to a class alignment with poor whites, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans can change be accomplished. And meanwhile blacks "must abandon their search for a past, must indeed recognize that they lack all claims to a distinctive cultural heritage, and that the path ahead lies not in myth-making and in historical reconstruction . . . but in accepting the epic challenge of their reality."

Patterson's article undoubtedly will arouse angry protest, both from blacks to whom the growth of "black consciousness" has been the only hopeful sign in a time of prolonged frustration, and from whites who have rediscovered and begun to celebrate ethnicity in "white society." But Patterson's response is clear: that ethnic identity no longer provides a basis for penetration into postindustrial society.

DAVID BENSMAN □

David Bromwich

Blood Orange, or Violence in the Movies

Hollywood movies used to make the gangster "understandable" by allowing him a human weakness, and the same trick of complication was played on cops. The unstated principle seemed to be: cops and robbers have more in common with each other than either can ever have with the organization man. They work by their own peculiar skills, and organizations are alien to them because they are individuals. This was the situation more than 30 years ago that gave us everything from *Scarface* down to *Angels with Dirty Faces* and *The Maltese Falcon*. Recently, however, on television and in the movies, there has been a shifting of the current. Corporate evil, which used to be the enemy of independent cop and robber alike, has been transformed into an angel of light. The evidence remains the same—what was evil and is now good has been steadily cold-blooded—but we are asked to draw a different conclusion. John Dillinger and Sam Spade would feel equally out of place in this world. Tamburlaine, a hot-blooded type, could never have worked for the intelligence squad of "Mission: Impossible," but then neither could Bogart or Cagney or Edward G. Robinson. Their good and evil, and their energy, belonged to themselves alone—and the age has set new demands.

The signs of what was coming go a long way back. In *White Heat*, for example, a 1949 Cagney vehicle with Edmund O'Brien as the cop, the endearingly psychotic criminal is pursued and finally caught by radar, and thousands of blue Los Angeles policemen watch like furies as he commits suicide. Cagney is not killed; he is eliminated. As early as that, however,

technological good guys were impossible without the element of individual pluck and wit. O'Brien provided just the right touch of native intelligence when he got isolated from the police network but still rebuilt his own radar set, illustrating the point that if we were to respect organizational cops at all they had to break with the organization at some stage and go it on their own. All this changed beyond recognition by the time of a film like *Experiment in Terror*, made in the early 1960s and heavily influenced by television. The law enforcement agents are mannequins with not even a flicker of human warmth, and they quarry the criminal—a homicidal pervert played by Ross Martin—by pretty nearly landing a helicopter on him in Candlestick Park. The pervert, at least, is as human as his perversion, but the cops have turned into a Big Brother who is good precisely because he is terrifying. "Mission: Impossible" takes the next and final logical step: quite commonly, the agents of that program choose not to kill their enemies outright, preferring to drive off in limousines after having tricked the hunted man into the snares of another criminal. Ordinary sympathy, in other words, has departed altogether, and so has irony.

To this state of affairs Stanley Kubrick bears an intriguing relation. On the one hand he is a good and pious liberal: *Paths of Glory* is solidly built on his faith, as is *Dr. Strangelove*, beneath all its veneer of iconoclasm. Kubrick is also something of an idolator of technology, that most pervasive manifestation of corporate evil: this fact lies behind the characteristic imagery of *2001* and was, I

think, an aspect of *Dr. Strangelove* that many of us were apt to ignore at the time. (Remember CRM-114?) The game has always worked both ways with Kubrick. In *Dr. Strangelove* he couldn't satirize the obsession with gadgetry without first taking it seriously, explaining the gadgets; in *2001*, where computers are meant to be taken very seriously indeed, he couldn't help making the whole business rather winningly foolish. If, then, *2001* is its own best parody, *Dr. Strangelove* may contain less of satire than we had imagined. The confusion is owing to divided feelings in Kubrick himself, a friend of individualism who seems nevertheless to be an ally of Big Brother. (Remember the monolith?) Such are the circumstances relevant to his new and ambitious contribution to the gangster film genre, *A Clockwork Orange*, which is his worst work to date.

Certainly it is his most confused. The film leaves no doubt that the object of its attack is, indeed, corporate evil—a welfare state that has reached advanced decadence—while what it seeks to propagate, the moral of the story, is the need for a free instinctual life among men. But what happens when that insistent moralism gets loaded into the conventions of a gangster film? Well, for one thing, it spoils all the fun, makes it a terribly dull movie to watch. *Public Enemy* thought of preaching to its audience, too, but it was never this slow and solemn; and though the comparison may be lowering, I would much rather see *Public Enemy* again than *A Clockwork Orange*. Let us take the comparison one step further and see where it leads. James Cagney and Malcolm McDowell both do the type of the hometown boy gone wrong: their environment has become intolerable, they turn to a life of crime, and we follow their exploits. Cagney ends badly and McDowell ends well—and why? Because Kubrick is throwing a sop to his audience; he is preaching a different sermon, and the physical resemblance between the two actors serves to heighten the contrast. Murderous violence has, in *A Clockwork Orange*, become the test case for all human instincts, so that Kubrick means something rather unusual when he speaks of solving the crime problem. Crime is life. Instinctual repression—dressed, naturally, in a police uniform—is death.

The didactic scheme of *A Clockwork Orange* could scarcely be sillier: I do not think my summary has done it any injustice. However, the siraple-mindedness of the film seems to me inseparable from what has gone sour in it at a far deeper level. The plot itself fits nicely with Kubrick's intentions. Alex, a streamlined Hell's Angel with plenty of experience in chainfighting, takes particular pleasure in rape ("the old in-out in-out") and the music of Beethoven ("Ludwig Van"). The film is done in an urban futuristic setting, and he is the hero; no one else is allowed to act the least bit human. Alex has a charming smile, and reminds one a little of Holden Caulfield, and when he gets carted off to jail it is a great tragedy; but he earns his freedom before too long by submitting to the Lodovico treatment, which looks something like a polite lobotomy. The treatment has made him hate sex and Beethoven, and when he stumbles into the house of a famous writer—who turns out to have been married to his last rape victim—this old hypocrite, who leads the left-wing opposition to the Lodovico treatment, actually makes an attempt (if I may borrow the language of the movie) to ninthsymphony Alex to death. The poor boy jumps out the window, but recovers; the shock of hitting cement has apparently sufficed to restore him to his old self; he indulges in an altogether pleasant sexual fantasy, and that finishes the story. "I'm cured!" he says. But the plot is utterly subverted, or at any rate muddled, by a frigid stylization that deadens every action in the film. This is literally true in the slowed-down fight sequences that have been set against Beethoven plus other-worldly electronic flourishes. And there is, consequently, no sense of humor in the entire film, though there is a great deal of portentous frivolity (doorbells ringing the first notes of the Fifth Symphony, and the like).

Kubrick has made his visual style surrealist on a grand scale, using the kind of sets that give every parking lot the appearance of a crater on the moon. Also, and I think this accounts for the film's attraction for otherwise intelligent people, he has understood the possibilities of pop art as a form of violence. That discovery may be the most original thing in *A Clockwork Orange*: in the Korova Milk-

bar episodes, for instance, with their molded enamel interiors, chill decor; and in the Cat Lady sequence, where green leotards become a pop invitation to murder. But alas, Kubrick gazes too long into the eyes of the dragon. He becomes what he contemplates. And his film moves quite naturally in the ambiance of Big Brother, so that its steady portrayal of Alex's enemies seems more like a complicity. How odd, in a tract about liberating the human spirit, that every image should feel predigested. For *A Clockwork Orange* is—like the propaganda movies that were a part of the Lodovico treatment, and despite its ostensible message—a terribly oppressive film to have to see. I say this without reference to the controversy that grew up around the film and for a time seemed about to bury us all.

A *CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, *Straw Dogs*, and *The Godfather* can all be seen as reactions against the notion of corporate good, really a vicious notion, which lately has become fixed in our popular culture: the attempt to win sympathy, that is, for the insulated group in its war against the isolated individual. The first two of these movies follow out their reaction to the point of folly, and substitute for corporate violence an old-fashioned respect for private *virtu*, personal violence. Their folly consists in mistaking *virtu* for virtue, when their heroes are in fact redundantly vicious. To stay on the “humane” bandwagon, Kubrick ends by apologizing for Alex's worst moments with the sentiments of all-purpose mitigation, “he was a born loser”; Sam Peckinpah, the director of *Straw Dogs*, being a more rigorous artist, assumes that one needn't stay on that bandwagon at all—which is certainly a more interesting line to take. You may not like my idea of virtue, but that's just too bad—pow! *The Godfather*, which seems to me one of the best American films ever made, puts paid to corporate violence with the emphasis on both words. But I shall return to this. Meanwhile, let us unravel some more confusions.

Those who objected to the depiction of violence in Kubrick's film were importantly wrong, because the gross physical violence in *A Clockwork Orange*, quite apart from its ideological content, was of a much lower order of magnitude than anything in a film like *The*

French Connection. The “X” rating of *A Clockwork Orange* had more to do, as these things will, with pubic hair than with blood. Why, then, was the debate over that movie conducted so fiercely? Probably the answer is that a good many people sensed the complicity to which I have alluded: complicity in every kind of violence, even the technological. This comes out not in the overt message but in the style. It is not that Kubrick likes violence. Rather, he likes the *idea* of violence, put to Beethoven music and processed and sterilized. We can find traces of a deeper resonance: Alex winning entrance to his victims' houses by complaining, “My friend is lying in the street, Ma'am, he's bleeding.” But nothing is made of it. Again, the confusion—or is it bad faith?—shows through when Hitler appears in the films that are to deprive Alex of his rightful human inheritance, his instinct for blood. Surely, Hitler represents precisely the impersonal violence that had better not be assimilated to Alex's revolt. It is an unfortunate movie and, unfortunately for Kubrick's reputation among intellectuals, a feeble-minded one. The only moments of relief come when McDowell steps out of his role, hopping or skipping or overacting, and making us laugh a little, thank God.

There is no such relief in *Straw Dogs*. Peckinpah is a director of Westerns—the best of them is *Ride the High Country*, though better than any of his films was a television adaptation of *Noon Wine*—and *Straw Dogs* is, so far as I can tell, a plague that he has sent down personally on the human race. He is a great misanthrope, and this is his *magnum opus* of hate. His story makes simple enough retelling, hate being among the simplest of emotions. Well then: a weak American academic is setting up residence in Britain (gentle insinuations of a flight from student turmoil: his wife bothers him vaguely about “commitment”); his wife is a bit of a kitten, a flirt (question never to be resolved: how did they get together?); the local rowdies rape his wife, and then try to break into the house to capture a mentally retarded criminal, whom the academic is protecting until justice can be brought. The academic, up to now a pretty tame fellow, finds that he must kill all the rowdies to protect his home, and that is just what he does,

and in the most exotic ways, too. (A bear trap over the head takes care of one.) The violence in this film, rated "R," is atrocious. And the message of it all is: he killed a lot of men, and he saw that he was good. Presumably, though this is to move past the end of the film, sex with the kitten will now be better than ever.

Is this such a very hard movie to render judgment on? We are being asked, it seems to me, not whether or not we assent to Peckinpah's view of human nature, but whether or not we can value his work in its particularities of expression. Yet the director has tricked his audience into a curious quandary. If one likes the film, he and his admirers suggest, that must be because it communicates a right vision of human nature through high art. If on the other hand one cannot abide the film, that must be because one is not sufficiently tough-minded, not sufficiently even-handed, about the pathological violence it so surely (indeed moralistically) commends, and one is thereby disqualified from judging the thing dispassionately on artistic grounds. Hence the phrase offered by a cautious admirer but an admirer all the same, "a fascist work of art."

My complaint against *Straw Dogs* is that it is a bad film. The dialogue, and I don't see how anyone can have missed this, has been stiffened absolutely beyond belief, as if the director stood trembling with anticipation of his climactic scene, where words will not matter. Dustin Hoffman as the academic manages to look surprisingly like a turtle, but characterization here never reaches far beyond caricature: this is a Western director's picture of an intellectual, the Hemingway picture. It was not respectable in Hemingway and it is not respectable here. Of course, Peckinpah like Kubrick has a didactic purpose. Like Kubrick, he is fond of citing a hack screenwriter and anthropologist named Robert Ardrey, who may fairly be described as a two-penny Hobbes. Peckinpah believes that we are aggressive beings after all, and that in this film he has finally got down to the root of the matter. Why do misanthropes want to convert everybody? But no matter: in a didactic way—as in any other—the film simply does not convince. During the most violent parts of *Straw Dogs*, when I saw it, the audience was driven to protect itself

with laughter; it was just too much. And that, I suggest, is not the way we respond to art.

What, in any case, can be meant by "a fascist work of art"? Works that are systematically antihuman cannot be called art, because a necessary point in any definition of art is that it humanizes. *Gulliver's Travels* is not apposite as a counterexample; its great lesson is not misanthropy but humility, and its effect is to chasten. Among directors, Clouzot strikes me as a fascist who made works of art: but somehow the two remain separate with him. *Wages of Fear* may be the supreme adventure movie, but the director's inhumanity stays always in the background—at worst, irritatingly in the background. And that film offers an ideal of heroism in which we want to believe, as does Peckinpah's *Ride the High Country*. It is, to be sure, one sign of critical maturity to be able to say: I do not like this work but I must allow it is art. However, I submit that to make this response to *Straw Dogs* would be wrong, and propose the following explanation instead.

Frank Kermode speaks somewhere of political myths as "degenerate fictions," and refers to fascism as one such myth. We have to use this label loosely with respect to Peckinpah, of course—anyhow the label is not of my own devising—but never mind that for the moment. The fiction, I think, in Peckinpah's case, was a rather narrow conception of heroism borrowed from Hemingway; and yet that conception plainly had a certain power and nobility, as anyone who saw *Ride the High Country* will recall. What we have been getting in place of the fiction, lightly disguised in *The Wild Bunch* and now, in *Straw Dogs*, emerging in all its repellent bareness, is a degenerate fiction. In short, a myth of violence. Having lost his belief in human decency, Peckinpah can no longer give us living characters—only lurid glimpses of the eternal principle of viciousness, with slight variations from one person to the next. Bleak landscape can work nicely to objectify this kind of nihilism: when Hoffman gazes out at the unfertile expanse of ground beyond his front yard—sparse brown grass, rubble, a few unconsoling trees—we know it is the best moment in the film. But when Hoffman exclaims over his feat of killing off the better part of the supporting cast "I did it! I

did it!" we want to ask him, as we might care to ask the director: what is it you have done?

THE FIRST LINE in *The Godfather* is "I believe in America." Don Vito Corleone, played remarkably by Brando in his most solid role since Terry Malloy, is being petitioned to murder a few young men who have raped a young Italian woman. The hoodlums have got no respect, her father says. He is a small-time undertaker and he believes in America, and America, for him, has begun to mean the Mafia. The Family. The shades of the room are drawn and the only color we see is a faded brown. Justice, the man goes on, demands that the rapists be killed. Ah, but that would not be justice, Don Corleone replies, because your daughter is still alive. And why have you waited till this moment to seek the kinship of the Family? Why have you waited till now, when you seek us only for protection? But never mind, we will find these hoodlums. And we may, some day, ask you to return the favor. Later in the movie, Don Corleone will ask the undertaker to clean up his son's corpse, which is riddled with bullets, to make it fit for a mother's eyes to see.

This is corporate violence with a vengeance, so to speak; it is Family life experienced simply as a part of family life. The family, small f, supplies warmth and comfort and, yes, love. The Family, large f, supplies cool business sense—takes care of finances. Here, we notice, is the characteristic separation of powers in American life. "I don't like violence," says a character. "I'm a businessman. Blood is a big expense." No garish light plays over the faces of these gangsters: to contemplate a tactical murder is not to blackmail someone on penalty of "rubbing him out," in the melodramatic flourish of the old days, but to "make him an offer he cannot refuse." The director of *The Godfather*, Francis Ford Coppola, has not been able to present his slice of life without a certain sacrifice. Because the story lacks a hero, it lacks also—I hesitate to say moral involvement, but no other words seem right. However, a story in the naturalistic vein about a subject like the Mafia looks forward to that weakness, and affords other satisfactions be-

sides. It has, for example, the satisfaction of inevitability. Al Pacino as Don Corleone's intelligent son, Michael, at first regards his family from a distance, estranged from it by a university education and war experience, adopting as far as he can the Ivy League man's opinion of bloody murder. He is brought into the family circle again by the attempted murder of his father, decides to do a murder himself, and thereafter becomes all but nominal head of the family. His gradual absorption of Brando's physical mannerisms, quirks of speech, executive logic, turns into an entire show in itself. There is nothing quite like it in the American cinema.

Coppola, one hopes, will now get the recognition he has long deserved. Even a glance at his first film, *You're a Big Boy Now*, will show where he parts company with another young director like Mike Nichols. In Coppola's film, for all the straight Salingerisms, we know right away that the director has thrown himself into life—take him where it will. He did not descend to the manner of a nightclub routine for a laugh, just as, in *The Godfather*, he does not descend to melodrama for a shudder. The writing and acting have a fullness, here, that one rarely finds in ambitious American films: Coppola has imported the great European middle style of Renoir and Ophüls—deep focus, fluid movement, minimal editing—and he has done it right. For anyone who cares about movies in this country, it is above all an encouraging film to watch. But it is also, and here I shall have to recur to my original point, something of an event. For it changes once and for all the image of corporate violence in America, in the same way—if with small things we may compare great—that *Madame Bovary* forever altered the image of the bourgeoisie in France. When a man gets strangled in *The Godfather*, we strangle with him. We do not see it covered over, made acceptable, by our driving off in a limousine. Coppola has put the rigor back into death; he has dissected the Family and made its warmth insidious; he has made room again, I think, for the free-lance detective and the free-lance hero. From now on, perhaps, "Mission: Impossible" really will not be possible. □

Henry Pachter

From Caudillo to Jefe Maximo

CUBA: THE PURSUIT OF FREEDOM, by Hugh Thomas. New York: Harper & Row. 1696 pp. \$20.

GUERRILLAS IN POWER: THE COURSE OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION, by K. S. Karól. Translated from the French by Arnold Pomerans. New York: Hill & Wang. 624 pp. \$13.

Until a decade ago, national revolutions in underdeveloped countries supposedly would establish constitutional governments. These revolutions were led by middle-class liberals or radicals who, it was hoped, might accelerate industrial development with the aid of foreign capital, would foster the growth of democratic movements and social institutions—and so would raise the lower classes to an economic, political, and cultural level approaching that of the Western proletariat.

Or, in the Bolshevik version of the conception, the liberal-bourgeois phase of the revolution would be followed by a second, radical-Jacobin or even proletarian revolution. Anyway, two distinct stages were thought necessary to achieve socialism.

The rise of Fidel Castro has reversed this order of expectations. In the Castroite conception of national revolutions, the liberal-bourgeois stage no longer is necessary; the revolution need not pass from the Gironde to the Jacobins. Even the symbolic wait from February to October that Lenin deemed necessary can now be dispensed with and is replaced by a kind of “permanent” or “protracted” revolution. This revolution is at once egalitarian, intensely national, and dictatorial. Since it is led by guerrillas, it does not degenerate into terror but begins with it—to settle down later into a regime modeled after the People’s Republics. If the revolution aligns itself with the

foreign policy of these Republics, the Kremlin’s ideologists do not treat its leaders as “national bourgeoisie,” as Stalin used to call them, but accredit their regime as a “national democracy.”

The fusion of intense nationalism with radical Jacobinism engenders a policy of confrontation, aimed against the former hegemonial power, and an anti-imperialism that precludes any cooperation with capitalistic corporations and governments that used to aid in the development of the country’s resources. The revolution then is compelled to bend every effort, to strain all human and material reserves, to exploit and squeeze every ounce of labor in order to overcome deficiencies in material equipment and build up new industries.

The task of “primitive accumulation,” the compulsion to catch up with other developing countries, the need to impose on a previously uncommitted and lethargic population a new “work ethic”—Paul Goodman has compared these revolutions with the Protestant Reformation—not merely supersede the original, democratic and egalitarian intentions of the revolution. Worse still, the ideology and energy of the revolutionary élan is used to direct it toward the goals of a totalitarian defense economy. The cause of equality becomes an instrument of a policy of autarky, and the idea of revolutionary sacrifice is confused with the phraseology of national defense.

IN PRESENT-DAY CUBA, as Nelson Valdes recently wrote in *Aportes*, Communism is mistaken for forcible investment. Where this happens, the revolution cannot retain its democratic sources but, on the contrary, must lapse more and more into a dictatorship that cannot wither away.

This conclusion has been reached simultaneously in these two books, both published last year, which for some time will be standard works on Cuba. The authors start out from almost opposite assumptions. Indeed it would be difficult to imagine two more different books or, for that matter, two more different authors.

Hugh Thomas is a deeply democratic historian at the University of Reading (England) who first became widely known, ten years ago, through his history of *The Spanish Civil War*—a sprawling account of the war that missed the significance of the revolution accompanying that war. His book on Cuba is even more sprawling. Its 1,500 pages of text, 14 appendixes, plus meticulous bibliography, glossary, maps, and plates, leave nothing unsaid and undiscussed: whether the first white man to set foot on Cuba might have been a Jew; under what flags the slave ships sailed and that the Danish ships had the highest death rates; facts about the Chinese trade with Cuba in the 19th century; that Castro's father was a ladies' man (which probably did not distinguish him from 12 million other Cubans).

The Czech journalist K. S. Karól, by contrast, writes in crisp French about the Revolution and nothing but the Revolution, hurrying from a few facts to world-historical theories; he obviously is less interested in events than in their significance. Karól does not write as a distant observer but from the inside of the Cuban Revolution. He has known all its leading men, and he has accompanied Castro on his famous trips through the island, which have replaced government procedures in that country.

Both authors share a loving interest in the Cuban people; both write sensitively about its sufferings and aspirations. Both have warm admiration for Fidel Castro and deplore rather than condemn his abandonment of freedom. Both are partisans of the Revolution. There the similarity ends: the two authors have each a

totally different conception of freedom and of the Cuban Revolution that occurred in the late 1950s.

Thomas is at a loss to understand why Castro gave up those liberties a British professor considers the heritage of man and a Western socialist deems an inextricable part of the definition of socialism. Thomas deplores the schoolchildren marching to meals in military formation; the proliferation of uniforms; the militarization of labor; the 20,000 political prisoners and the 5,000 executions (from 1959 to 1970); the censoring of writers and artists; the public shaving of hippies; the Stakhanovite methods of production; and the moral pressures to make sacrifices for the state—all the measures, in short, which Sartre and other well-disposed visitors have generously interpreted as benevolent attempts to overcome old-fashioned capitalist attitudes. Thomas can only wring his hands and ask whether all this is really necessary to make Cuba economically and politically independent. He even goes so far as to suggest that, perhaps, a little more freedom might have helped Castro avoid some costly blunders. For instance, had a free press been able to warn him, Castro might not have wagered his prestige on the unattainable target of a 10-million-ton harvest of sugar in 1970. Liberty, Thomas concludes, is a convenience besides being a principle.

Thomas fails to see why Castro did not develop other methods than forced labor once he had adopted productivity as the central aspiration of the Revolution. Karól understands that THE PLAN called for either of two alternatives equally repugnant to him: either to revert to "capitalism" with material incentives, or to leap forward toward "Communism," after the model of Stalin and Mao. Castro chose Stalin; Karól suggests that one can do that only if at the same time man's mind is reconstructed—as in China. Karól feels that transformation of capitalist instincts into socialist solidarity must precede the setting of goals for productivity. But, as the Cultural Revolution has shown, Mao would rather accept low performance than give up his revolutionary goals.

Unlike Thomas, Karól applauds Ché Guevara's eloquent plea for the "new man" who achieves "complete identification of govern-

ment and community without the commonplaces of bourgeois democracy . . . [and avoids] any formalization that might make us lose sight of the ultimate goal: to free man from alienation." Since this, however, is utopian (and Karól, who has absorbed his Trotsky, does not believe in socialism on one small island), the only logical course is to use Cuba as the power base of a protracted fight against U.S. imperialism.

Karól nostalgically remembers the heroic period when Castro assembled the Tri-Continental Conference in Havana and Guevara issued his call for "two, three, many Vietnams." Those were the days when the bureaucrats in Moscow were appalled at what might rightly be called the "Cuban heresy"—its communes; its disregard of cost-accounting; its strident demand of gratuitous help from the richer countries of the Soviet bloc; its provocative support of guerrilla activities in other Latin-American countries. Then the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) proclaimed, "Let us be done with the concept of a national bourgeoisie." And then President Dorticos asked the stingy Russians just where Marx had said that socialist countries must exchange their goods at world-market prices instead of the "true labor value" embodied in them—an allusion to the "scissors" between the prices the Soviet Union pays and charges.

This period came to an abrupt end when Castro decided to succeed and achieve. The goal of world revolution was subordinated to the gamble on a 10-million-ton harvest,¹ and diversification of Cuban farming and the development of Cuban industries were sacrificed to the necessity of exporting a big crop; Cuba became a supplier of sugar to the Soviet bloc, and the free flowering of the Cuban people's producers' associations and self-governing bodies was declared counterrevolutionary. Ché, who to the end remains Karól's hero, went into his exile, a deeply disappointed man who was seeking nothing but death.²

¹ And I shall show that the nature of the gamble was the cause of its failure.

² In his memoirs of Nasser, Mohammad Heikal related Ché's complaints about corruption among Cuban Communist officials, about the harsh terms of Soviet aid, and about his disappointed hopes in terms closely resembling those reported by

In 1921, when Lenin had to choose between similar alternatives, he instituted the NEP; Castro chose a system that Karól likens to Stalinism. What caused the difference? First of all, of course, the mere fact that the Soviet Union was prepared to underwrite the reenslavement of Cuba. Second, 40 years of pseudosocialist history may have convinced Castro that it was possible to devise a shortcut to development. The third difference is the character of the Cuban Revolution—a point on which, curiously, the theories of Thomas and Karól converge, which I shall explain in detail below.

At first sight, one would think that for the Bolshevik Revolution, which had triumphed over a bourgeois-democratic government, the "retreat" (Lenin's word) of the NEP was more difficult to accept than for the Cuban Revolution, which had grown out of a democratic revolution. But as Thomas makes clear, despite the many revolutions in Cuban history, its democratic traditions and aspirations were really much weaker than they had been in Russia. The pathetic attempts of Cespedes in 1933 to establish a "middle-class government" or of Grau San Martin in 1934 to conduct a "Girondin revolution" collapsed either because the native and foreign interests brought the reform government down or because radical forces tried to push the reformers into suicidal adventures. The radicals were usually "fanaticized" students, certainly not Communists.³ But there was no middle class that could have sustained a web of republican institutions or formulated ideas that might have linked the technical and economic elites with the masses.

THOMAS ALMOST REGRETS the passing of the

Karól. Heikal adds two observations Karól claims he had no knowledge of: that Guevara had indeed fallen out with Castro, and that he had told Nasser of his death wish.

³ Even in 1934, when there was no cold war but a rapprochement between Western nations and the Soviet Union, FDR's Ambassador Sumner Welles discovered "Communists" among Grau San Martin's followers. And in his book Batista has charged that Grau opened the door to a "Communist conspiracy" during his second Administration, 1944–48. Ironically, it was Batista who had given two cabinet seats to Communists in 1940.

old oligarchy, the Spanish colonizers, the *criollo* bourgeoisie, the old families that ruled on the basis of recognized customs. They might have built a nation, and then new democratic movements might have transformed the traditional society into a modern state. But abolition and independence destroyed the cultural web, and then came the Snopeses—adventurers without tradition and morality, conquerors, speculators and politicians without roots in the community—Europeans, Americans, Jews, mulattoes.

These characterize a colonial economy and a colonial society. Presidents had (or acquired) a criminal record. Julio Lobo, of a Curaçao Jewish family, owned half the sugar that was sold to the U.S., as well as hotels, banks, and radio stations; Ché Guevara one day placed him before the alternative either to leave the country or to become—the manager of its socialized sugar industry! Dayton Hedges, a small contractor from Louisiana, founded the Cuban rayon industry and sold it to Batista's government in 1958; his sons married into a noble *criollo* family and were Cubans in everything but their passports. But statistics do not distinguish between acclimatized Americans and absentee owners any more than history cares whether the frequent U.S. interventions worked any good for Cuba.

A word may be necessary about U.S. influence in Cuba's economy. One wishes Thomas had provided a table showing the percentage of U.S. property in various industries. In textiles it had been paramount, but under Batista it decreased rapidly. The sugar-mill capacity owned by Americans declined from 55 percent in 1939 to 36 percent in 1958. The percentage share of American-owned banks in total deposits decreased from 50 to 40 in the same interval. The public utilities, mining, and oil refineries were almost totally North American. During World War II the U.S. government opened a nickel mine that eventually produced 10 percent of the world's nickel; it was closed in 1947 and has not been reopened.

Thomas makes no effort to evaluate whether on balance the Cuban economy was benefited or despoiled by U.S. investors. But that is not the point; the point is that in Cuban political mythology the Yankees occupy the place of the Jews in countries of nascent or weak

capitalism. They provided services Cubans failed to provide, but they also were envied and suspected of using monopolistic practices and political collusion to promote their private and collective interests. Three New Deal pillars—A. A. Berle, Charles Taussig, and Rexford Tugwell—were involved with the American Molasses Company; though there is no proof of wrong-doing, visibility is half of the proof that something is fishy. Again, Cuban historians have charged that Theodore Roosevelt's proconsul, Charles Magoon, corrupted Cuban society, and Herbert Matthews has repeated the charge. But Thomas shows that it was, rather, a corrupt Cuban society that availed itself of Magoon to indulge its own national habits. Cuba, of itself, did not bring forth a middle class that might have overcome the economy's colonial structure.

The same conditions that made the economy colonial also left Cuban politics in the hands of adventurers and outsiders. The alternative to the ruling "kleptocracy" was raised not by representatives of specific class interests but by the "liberators" who professed populist ideologies and voiced the grievances of the lowly without ever formulating negotiable programs. They had to strike the idealistic pose of tribunes of "the nation," embodying its general will. They were not in the political market but "above parties." As Castro told Karól: they were revolutionaries with a party or without one. Their followers were those who are unrepresented and cannot be organized: in a symbolic way they embody the resentment of all those for whom government is "They." The same mass also had followed the greatest leaders of Cuban populism—the inspired José Martí, the brave mulatto Antonio Maceo, the half-crazy Eduardo Chibás who staged his suicide on the radio, the liberal Grau San Martín of the first (four-month) Administration. Their charisma often was based on nonpolitical myths. Thus Thomas reports that in the first weeks after the victory of the Revolution in 1959, people compared Castro to "Clavelito, a miraculous broadcaster who cured disease by his voice. Cuba is a country where politics, magic, and religion are neighboring provinces."

Thomas writes that "this is not Caribbean Bonapartism," though similar beliefs could be found in Mussolini's Italy and among the

followers of Napoleon III. Moreover, Cuban history provides numerous precedents of Bonapartism. Thomas himself compares Batista to Nasser; Castro, commenting on the coup d'état of 1969 in Peru, welcomed generals who lead a popular revolution. Machado donned the mantle of *tribunus plebis* at the end of his bloody career. Batista started out with a program of national and social revolution that sent shudders down the spine of Wall Street. He was elected enthusiastically and overwhelmingly by the common people; it was the bourgeoisie who opposed him with the candidacy of Grau San Martín. (The latter then justified the confidence of the liberals by allowing his mistress to take the bribes which he, the incorruptible President, forbade himself to accept.) The pattern of Bonapartism emerges when Thomas compares Batista to Trujillo, who also claimed the title "Benefactor": Batista "was a dictator who wished always to be loved, a democratically elected president. . . . He was less himself a torturer than a weak man [*sic*] surrounded by cruel ones whom he could not control." If this may sound strange today, Thomas quotes Batista's favorable comments on the Communist party and, in turn, the Communist leader Blas Roca's support for Batista, "the focal point of democracy." He also quotes the unflattering observations made by "respectable representatives of Cuban public life and all the old middle-class and professional groups," whom Batista had "alienated."

Similar pictures have been drawn of Perón, and the parallels go even further: both Perón and the Cuban dictators Machado and Batista have bolstered their populist, national-revolutionary image by dallying with the Communists and by striking the pose of anti-Yankee national liberationists.

There is no need to elaborate that in Latin-American politics it pays to confront the *coloso del norte*. Nationalism has been the natural ideology of student politics. It has served as a catalyst not only for mergers of various movements inside Cuba but for united fronts throughout the hemisphere and beyond. It still is the most virulent agent of political "fanatization" in underdeveloped countries. Nationalism can be joined to a rightist (conservative or fascist) ideology as well as to a leftist (populist, revolutionary, even Com-

munist) ideology. In the 1930s and 1940s, Perón and Vargas passed for semifascists; but in the context of the Cold War, nationalism adopted a socialist mimicry and passed itself off as leftist. Cuban dictators were forerunners of many nationalist leaders who later were to ally themselves with Communists, with the Soviet Union or China.

MOST OF THE COMMUNIST LEADERS came from the same background as the nationalist leaders and made their political debut in the student movement. This was true of the brothers Castro and the brothers Escalante as well as of Carlos Rodríguez and Juan Marinello, Batista's Communist ministers; Julio Antonio Mella is still worshiped as the great idealist who associated himself with the Communists and was martyred. As in other underdeveloped countries, the workers who came to the Communist party were not typically industrial proletarians. Blas Roca, long-time Party secretary, was a shoemaker; his predecessor had been a decorator in—the presidential palace. Only Lázaro Peña, a black tobacco worker, and José Miguel Pérez, a transport worker who had come from the anarchists, remained the Party's solid links to the trade union movement.

According to Karól, the Party was directed by the Italian Vittorio Vidali, who was known as "Carlos"; according to Thomas, later, perhaps, by a Polish Jew known as "Juan." Its numbers were insignificant; it is quite misleading when Thomas speaks of a "Communist center" at Manzanillo. The Cuban Communist party had not grown out of the labor movement, which was largely anarchist, but imposed itself on it—or, rather, it was imposed by the dictators, who gave the Communists the job of keeping the trade unions in line. In 1939 Batista threw the anarchist leadership out and gave the Confederación Nacional Obrera Cubana a new name—Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba—as well as a palatial office and assembly building. At that time the Party claimed its highest membership figure ever before 1959—23,300.

But this was a limited success. When President Grau San Martín in turn ousted Peña from the trade union palace, very few workers followed their leader to Mount Aventinus; the majority stayed in the Auténtico (government-

sponsored) unions: the gangster system of Cuban politics made it possible for one group of adventurers to capture the trade union leadership as long as it had the government's backing. This is representation by usurpation.

The picture emerging from Thomas's description, then, is that of a basically apathetic population whose most active part devotes itself to corrupt business and government practices and whose most articulate part—mainly students and others exasperated by the moral decay of the middle classes—is seething with constant revolution and engaging in desperate, often fantastic actions.⁴

If by a miracle, or because a government collapses under its own weight, such a coup succeeds, one of these consequences may follow: the idealism of the revolutionary government withers away and its personnel is absorbed into the corrupt routines of society; the army takes over and imposes its own puritan discipline until its leaders succumb to the seduction of power; the popular leader may establish a dictatorship which he may bolster by coopting pseudorepresentative groups. All of these things may happen together; but never had a revolution in Cuba provided organs that could express freely the aspirations of society.

Batista had "given" Cuba a model Constitution in 1940, and therefore he could take it away when it no longer suited him. The middle class, which supported Castro in 1958, dreamed of restoring that Constitution; yet it meant little in terms of real social power—and therefore Castro not only was able to but had to discard it. He saw that the vicious circle of Cuban politics could be broken only by permanent revolution—the welling up of new social aspirations which simultaneously, while in the process of being formulated, had to form, define, and shape the society wherein they were to fulfill themselves.

As Boris Goldenberg, Juan Bosch, and Theodore Draper have shown, the Cuban

Revolution was neither a "peasant revolution" nor a "proletarian revolution." Thomas confirms this and Karól does not deny it. If nothing else, the collapse of the "general strike" called for April 9, 1958, showed that the July 26 Movement did not have sufficient roots among the workers at a time when Batista already was in serious trouble and had been abandoned even by Eisenhower.⁵

BATISTA'S FALL, both Thomas and Karól agree, was caused by the massive defections from his regime—defections by the Catholic Church, the civil service, the army officers, businessmen, the middle class (the intellectuals had never been in his camp)—but Castro's military actions as such contributed little to Batista's fall. They were a symbol, a flag, a myth—and a power only through the charisma of one man's name.

Readers of Thomas's book on the Spanish Civil War know how much he likes to describe battles and battle plans; but in this voluminous book, which abounds in guerrilla adventures over a 150-year period, the guerilla war of 1958 is summarized in a few brief pages, culminating in the almost regretful statement that on Castro's side only 46 partisans were killed and on Batista's side even fewer.

Karól, who has his eye less on military than on political shifts of power, records in greater detail the numerous actions of the *Directorio* and the political parties that allied themselves with the 26th of July Movement in "the plain," i.e., in the cities. There they formed the coalition that intended to rule Cuba after Batista's fall. They practically dominated civilian life in the population centers; as in every revolution, the civil service and utilities were working for the future masters long before the old tyrant had fled. Castro was able to collect a levy on sugar production that was paid in 1958 even by the American mills.

Why was this liberal-left coalition not able to govern after victory? Thomas never thought it could, because the Cabinet of Urrutia was

⁴ Any objective analysis must conclude that Castro's participation in the 1947 expedition against Santo Domingo was quixotic; that the attack on the Moncada barracks was ill-considered; and that the 1957 landing of the *Granma* was unrelated to any genuine class movement. And yet, these events form Cuba's revolutionary history—depending entirely on luck and on the enemy's stupidity.

⁵ By all accounts, the blow that hit Batista hardest was the U.S. arms embargo of March 12, 1958, which in effect gave the officers a signal to leave the sinking ship. All sources agree that the Communists did not join the cause of Castro until its success had become clear—in August.

nothing but a coalition of old-style politicians. The masses behind them were not organized, while Castro's *barbudos* were a well-disciplined force endowed with the halo of heroes and martyrs. Above all, it was the charismatic personality of Fidel himself that was well-established long before the victory of the Movement. The 26th of July Movement was Castro; there was no one who could challenge his leadership, and he could dispose of the state as he pleased because there was no state, no public power whatsoever that did not emanate from Castro.

Having spent so much pain and printer's ink on the proof that a liberal regime either would not last or would lapse into the old Cuban routine, and having described the consequent usurpation of the Revolution by the imagination of one man, or perhaps two men, Thomas fails to recognize that this was the only possible way to prevent a repetition of 1933 or 1934—another Grau San Martinade. He deplores the loss of freedom, but he is reluctant to acknowledge that this was the price paid for a social revolution that has only begun. Perhaps Urrutia could not have stopped the Revolution, but it was Castro alone who knew how to continue it.

Karól finds this escalation necessary, Thomas probably would have liked a social democratic regime—but there were no social democrats. Castro decided to create for himself a nation in his own image—puritan, visionary, and merry too. Nothing in Cuban society pointed to Communism—was there any chance for a radical Jacobin rule, perhaps with a sort of NEP?

Evidently, the Cuban Revolution could not be content with self-congratulations and public merriment. Had it remained the "beautiful revolution" à la La Fayette that it seemed to be in 1959, had it merely fulfilled the famous dream Castro expressed in his "History will absolve me" speech—restoration of civil rights and laws, of the Constitution, its Congress and President and Courts, of the right to speak freely, to assemble, to associate—then the Cuban Revolution would never have become the historic event it has been to this day. By the will of its leader it had to pass from the Girondin to the Jacobin stage. K. S. Karól lucidly explains why: when Castro saw that his

allies wanted to continue cooperating with North America and were opposed to his own concept of an "integral democracy," he had to assert the general will the revolution was to give to the nation. Its aim was said to be not the happiness of many but the happiness of the whole, not freedom for each but liberation of all. Karól probably is right when he says that Castro did not have to change or to betray his program. He certainly had not been a Communist in the Sierra—his program then was "larger"—but when he saw that national liberation required expropriation of the counterrevolutionaries and mobilization of the workers, then

from that realization to the conviction that his program had been socialist from the beginning was only a short step. . . . Overnight the proletariat was turned into the hero of the revolution while the guerrilleros and the urban resistance fighters were relegated to a subsidiary role, turned into more or less passive pawns.

On December 2, 1961, Castro announced that he had "always been a Leninist," which was a plain lie.⁶ But subjectively he could feel that the Revolution had gone straight from its democratic beginnings to its radical consequences. The Cuban Revolution was not of the one-two, February-October, bourgeois-socialist type that still figures in Russian textbooks; it was not even of the Gironde-Jacobin type Marx saw in *The Communist Manifesto*. It wanted to be "permanent," and for that reason it had to assume the most significant feature of permanent revolution: its expansion into neighboring countries by propaganda, terrorism, and possible conquest. This revolution required the total mobilization of all citizens against foreign and domestic enemies of the new nation. Castro

⁶ Guevara had converted Raúl Castro while they were in Mexico; both incurred Fidel's wrath when he found out. The contact was made when Rodríguez came to the Sierra in August 1958; the alliance probably was concluded in January 1959. The Communists were given power over the trade unions by Castro for the same reason Machado and Batista had given it to them: to keep the workers in line. The speech of December 2, 1961, however, had significance in foreign rather than domestic affairs: Castro wished to make sure that the Soviet Union would treat Cuba like a member of its bloc.

whipped nationalism into a frenzy of “anti-Yankee-imperialism.” He needed a confrontation to justify the state’s ever-tightening hold on the citizens, the militarization of labor, the emphasis on productivity and the sugar harvest.

HERE we come to the most tragic, and theoretically most difficult, turn of the Revolution. Its significance is not covered by the term Thermidor, or only if we keep in mind that the French Revolution continued its revolutionary wars after the Thermidor and that the Terror did not stop either but continued to rage against the Left as well as the Right. The Cuban Revolution too must be permanent in the minds of its defenders, of its admirers abroad, and even in the minds of its directors. Though in reality it is already in its stagnating phase—socially, politically, and economically—an image of “movement” must be maintained for the sake of the ideology. Dynamism holds the regime together, even if the frantic commotion results only in “marking time.” Just as Stalin asked for new sacrifices in order to justify the earlier ones, Castro must keep his people in constant agitation; to justify its past experiments, the regime must pursue new experiments, most of them amateurish or totally improvised for the purpose of the day. Thus, while instituting successive productivity drives, Castro has actually diminished productivity to the point where the native tradition of easygoingness has overtaken the puritan ethics of the Revolution, while at the same time the ideology forbids a return to material incentives. There were mishaps—climatic, the U.S. boycott, human failures, mismanagement; yet a large part of the mechanical failures must be laid to Castro’s system and to the compulsiveness of the ideology.

Whenever the system and its ideology run into contradictions, the leader remains the only link between the origin of the Revolution and its future. As embodiment of the general will, his actions assert the sovereignty of the revolutionary ideology. Karól reports in vivid detail how Castro shapes policy by inspiration, and Thomas points out that Castro is in complete control of the process of permanent revolution. Since it was he who had called in the Communists, he deposed some, disciplined others, and could dismiss them all any day. He called in

the army to organize the citizen’s daily life—but he can dismiss it and replace it by any other organ he may create on the spur of the moment. He enacts laws by announcing them at mass meetings; when touring the island he decides on the spot where to build a plant or establish a model farm, construct a bridge or found a school. It is not just one-man government; it also is one-man revolution.

There is no other driving force or decision-making organ; the Revolution has not created institutions to survive Castro. He rules in the style of the Latin-American *caudillo*; what happens to the Revolution depends entirely on him. So far Castro has shown considerable political instinct and has retained his people’s confidence despite the obvious hardships—which can be blamed on “imperialism.” What he has provided for them is, on the whole, better than what the mass of them have ever had before—materially and in terms of national pride, feeling of equality, and intellectual stimulation. Yet no one knows whether they appreciate it or would rather live at a slower pace. Castro himself told Karól, in answer to a question on elections, that 50 percent of the people were “true revolutionaries”; but on the basis of what he saw, Karól doubted this estimate. People are weary of the constant pressure. They work more and consume less because the state must invest 30 percent of the annual product or use it for payments to the Soviet bloc.

This may not be all the people’s idea of socialism, but the reassurance that the mighty Soviet Union backs up Castro’s regime is the force that holds them in line. Castro has created a vicious circle that prevents the Cubans from escaping his hold. This also is the reason he has rejected, again and again, U.S. overtures toward relaxation of the tension. Pressure alone maintains dictatorship.

Karól charges that Castro’s power now rests on three myths: that the leader knows best; that the Soviet bloc must be defended as a whole; and that in a socialist country everyone must make sacrifices.

The people, of course, are given to understand that Castro’s commitment to the Soviet Union, to productivity, and to his own dictatorship are but temporary expedients—a belief that could not be justified by a party dictatorship but may well rest in the personal confidence

Fidel Castro has earned through his courage, his generosity, his frankness in distress, his humanity, even his failings. His system is not "Fidelismo," because it is Fidel himself—an extraordinary example of a man creating for himself a people in order to make a revolution.

It is a strange commentary on the experts' political sophistication and on the revolutionary consciousness of the Left that the posture Castro strikes vis-à-vis the powers has been able to obscure the failure of the Cuban Revolution as revolution. It does not seem to have deepened the self-awareness of the masses, who are conscious only of their increased work load; it has not strengthened the ties between people and government, except that the government has tied the people in knots; it has not increased freedom of expression but has increased oppression; finally, it has not even succeeded in the self-assigned task of economic development, despite the Herculean efforts made by the people and its leaders. Nor has it made Cuba independent; the country only has exchanged masters abroad.

If despite all this Fidel still is worshiped as the greatest revolutionary leader in this hemisphere, the reason must clearly be sought in the views of his followers abroad who are hypnotized by their own definition of revolution.

THIS CONCEPTION, which by now is closely identified with Third World ideologies, is an image rather than a theory of revolution. It involves, first, the *caudillo* or leader, a charismatic figure chosen because of his populist roots and his victory in a courageous fight; then, his defiance of a great world power and the assertion of national sovereignty against great adversity; and finally, the attainment of certain economic-development goals through heroic measures. This image, however, also fits Perón, Nasser, Mussolini, Atatürk, and also Castro—and, as we have seen, almost several of Castro's predecessors. But these predecessors dared not cast themselves in the classical role of Bonaparte; they stopped at the stage of benevolent despotism and were too timid in pursuing the goal of nationalism.

Castro fulfilled all the requirements of the populist myth; he is the perfect Robin Hood and also projects the image of the modern leader of a national and social revolution. But,

as Karól makes abundantly and tragically clear, Castro also had to fulfill the two conditions that actually killed the Revolution: first, under prevailing conditions his Revolution had to be personal and despotic, precluding any development of popular revolutionary organs; second, the Revolution and Castro's hold on it had to be justified by, and indeed intimately tied to, the idea of development, thereby precluding the choice of any truly socialist priorities. As René Dumont has shown [see *DISSENT*, September–October 1970], the militarization of labor made a mockery of socialism. Unfortunately, as the response to Fidelismo abroad shows, this misuse of socialist labels for economic-development techniques also threatens to pervert the meaning of socialism. In Cuba it has been alienated not only from its democratic roots but even from a strictly economic definition. □

Terry M. Perlin

Radical Mavericks

POST-SCARCITY ANARCHISM, by Murray Bookchin. Berkeley: Ramparts Press. 288 pp. Cloth \$6.95, paper \$2.95.

Anarchists are frequently on the defensive. The most shrill revolutionary faction, they seem always to occupy the losing side of history. Hounded by the state they reject, repelled by the revolutions they aid, the anarchists have been the marginal men of the Left.

Recently, however, anarchists like Murray Bookchin are speaking with unusual confidence, a result of the conviction that history has validated the anarchist analysis and opened the door to the anarchist utopia. The kids are dropping out of school; a new class of *Lumpen* fills the streets; technology is either burning out or blowing up; the state's credibility is nearly destroyed; the socialist states have demonstrated their corruptness; decentralization of power is becoming a popular notion; free love, birth

control, and abortion are openly advocated; the liberation of women is more than a political slogan; fathers and sons have little in common; a new ruralism attracts men to the land. All these things—most of which have been seen before—have now *combined* at one point in time.

Post-Scarcity Anarchism presents a serious argument: at this very moment the United States is on the threshold of a new epoch, one in which traditional forms of economic organization, social relations, and political authority will become obsolete. The new society, based on abundance and not on the struggle for scarce resources, is rapidly coming into existence. Technology—once a fearsome object for most anarchists—is the key. The age of cybernation and automation will make possible a realistic utopia, not in heaven but today on earth.

The impediment to a widespread understanding of this phenomenon is what Bookchin regards as a “mind-lag.” The main limiting factor is Marxism, a social theory applicable only to an age of scarcity.

The central concepts of revolutionary Marxism—class and class conflict, the seizure of power by the proletariat, the creation of a socialist state—are anathema. Bookchin despises the centralization of economic and political power, the bureaucratization of daily life, and the ruthlessness of the “proletarian dictatorship.” The vulgar Marxism of Progressive Labor or the Maoist Left are only recent examples of the Neanderthal view of the worker that is implicit in Marxism-Leninism: a view, puritanical and regimented, which sees the model man as hard-working, thrifty, efficient, sober, rational, and progressive.

Thus far, Bookchin’s attack on the Marxists is not unlike that of his anarchist predecessors. But what he offers is far less important than when he is offering it. For we all realize that socialism, especially state socialism, has failed to make a new world. The Russian Revolution, which even anarchists once supported, has turned sour. Marxists, Bookchin suggests, are now on the defensive, and the anarchists, once merely the idealistic consciences of revolution, are prepared to show their stuff.

The key to Bookchin’s thought is found in a single phrase: “Anarcho-communists seek to preserve and extend the anarchic phase that opens all the great social revolutions.” Here

both the progressive *and* the reactionary character of anarchism is evident.

The anarchists want nothing less than the successful accomplishment of the revolution. But everywhere it has been betrayed. From the extermination of the *enragés* to the liquidation of the Kronstadt sailors to the betrayal of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists, revolution has meant ideological and physical defeat for the anarchists.

Yet preserving the purity and spontaneity of the revolution is no mean task. Distrustful of power, and of its illicit effects, the anarchists seek “to dissolve all the organizational forms developed in the prerevolutionary period . . . into these genuine revolutionary organs.” These organs are the soviets, the authentic social form of self-management: popular, democratic, and decentralized.

Why should anarchist soviets not suffer the same fate as workers’ councils in most revolutions—namely destruction by a foreign enemy or takeover by an elitist party? Because, says Bookchin, the anarchists will “try to prevent bureaucracy, hierarchy and elites from emerging in their midst.” Bookchin is optimistic about the impact of revolutionary idealism. But he has no answer for those who accuse the anarchists of romanticism and nostalgia, of desiring to arrest the course of history, or of simple incompetence in dealing with the issues of power and authority.

Perhaps I have been unfair. Perhaps I have made Bookchin out to be a hopeless utopian and, worse, a backward-looking dreamer, attracted by the purity of ruralism that hastened the downfall of Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy. This surely is not Bookchin’s intention; he is infatuated with the potential of technology. From self-regulating control mechanisms in manufacture to cybernetically produced automobiles to solar house-heating, he portrays a boundless technological cornucopia. “The most critical function of technology,” he says, “must be to keep the doors of the revolution open forever.” By assimilating artistic craftsmanship with machine labor, men could reach a degree of sophistication and prosperity unparalleled in history.

On the subject of production, Bookchin out-rhapsodizes Marx by forecasting a society in which the domination of nature is no longer

necessary. Though unacknowledged, strains of Herbert Marcuse appear in Bookchin's work: we find the same expectation that sensibly directed economic organization can abolish scarcity and can usher in a life without repression, guilt, or domination.

Yet reservations about the theoretical and practical validity of this experimentalism abound. Who, for example, is to make the new revolution? For Bookchin, who is neither democrat nor elitist, the answer is the *grupo de afinidad* (affinity group), "a new type of extended family . . . [held together] by deeply empathetic human relationships" and devoted to the creation of the new society. This "tribe," uncentralized and nonbureaucratic, becomes molecularly linked in times of crisis—say, in Paris in 1968—and leads the revolution, propelled by the revolutionary people. Though Bookchin denies any desire to dominate the "revolutionary people," reliance on the unspecified direction of affinity groups is not very reassuring to the skeptical radical.

What is missing in *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* is a confrontation with the realities of revolution. There is hardly a mention of the question of violence. Simply supporting the notion of "direct action" or, on the other hand, criticizing earlier revolutionaries for their slaughter of innocents does not confront the question of how anarchists would simultaneously seize and destroy political power.

Positing that "a basic sense of decency, sympathy and mutual aid lies at the core of human behavior" is no answer to the challenges of Freud and later aggression theorists who suggest that the masses depend on strong leadership. It is fine to expose the shibboleths of statist propaganda—and this is the chief contribution of anarchists. But creating a viable anti-politics is a more difficult task, one that Bookchin has not accomplished.

YET a softer feeling remains after having read this book. It is the work, not of a demagogue but of an honest revolutionary, a man depressed by past failures but not yet despondent. He seems to me the political equivalent of what Herbert Read, the British art critic and anarchist, deemed the true artist: "what the Germans call *ein Rüttler*, an upsetter of the established order." □

Joseph Clark

Trials & the State

THE CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICAL TRIALS, 1950–1954, edited by Jiri Pelikan. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 360 pp. \$10.95.

During that remarkable spring of 1968 when most Czechoslovak Communists were striving toward a "socialism with a human face," the Party leadership set up a commission "to make a final inquiry into the notorious political trials of the 1950s." The report never saw the light of day in Czechoslovakia because a long winter arrived that August.

This volume, containing the full text of the suppressed report, will be valuable for students of that lovely and ill-fated little republic. It is a tale that has been told before. More vivid, if less official, is *The Confession* by Artur London, upon which the fine Costa-Gavras film of the same title was based. Now a large body of literature is building up in which adherents of Communism reveal evils wrought by Communists; perhaps the outstanding work in this genre is Medvedev's study of Stalinism. All of these books, including the one under review, suffer from a paradox: they defend Communism in the face of the horrors it inflicted on millions of people and under which the authors themselves were victims. Countless numbers were imprisoned and tortured. They confessed to crimes they never committed, "believing that by their self-accusation they were serving their Party and the cause of socialism," as Jiri Pelikan, the editor of this volume, puts it.

To those to whom the very thought of socialism without democracy is inconceivable, it will seem strange to read the tribute in this report to the "socialist" revolution carried out under Gottwald in Czechoslovakia. And the tangled political skein that *must* be woven by this system suddenly becomes obvious when the authors of this report state: "The political system of our country is based, and will continue to be based, on the principle that the leading role is exercised by the Communist Party." During those bright and heroic events

of 1968 it became clear that honest Communists were coming to the realization that the real question was not whether the government owned the means of production, but whether the people owned the government. It was also clear that there could be no rule by working people, or any other people, without freedom of choice, without a multiparty choice, and without full freedom of speech, of press, of assemblage.

The incredible story of the Czech trials is that these did not even involve political opposition. It was sufficient to have been a veteran of the antifascist war in Spain or to have been a Jew to be selected for the horrors of framed trials, long imprisonment and, in thousands of cases, the gallows.

How often it has been suggested that we have little moral right to condemn unjust trials in the Communist lands since we have our share of trials such as those that victimized the Berrigans. But to read the record of the Slansky trial is to realize what a gulf separates the legal systems of Communist (or fascist) regimes and democracies. The inability to make or see such distinctions can have bizarre and tragic consequences. I am reminded of an American couple, the Ricketts, who were arrested in China and charged with espionage. They were jailed for four years without trial. Then, *after* they served their sentence, they were tried and found guilty. The Ricketts then wrote a book, *Prisoners of Liberation*, in which they heaped high praise on the Chinese political and legal system. They "confessed" their guilt but, after doing so, could not describe the guilty acts to which they confessed!

No doubt, someone like J. Edgar Hoover would not have been loath to imitate some of the practices of the Communist legal systems. He personally found Berrigan "guilty," before he was tried, of plotting to kidnap Kissinger. Fortunately there was a trial and a jury, and Hoover's "conviction" was rejected by the 12 men and women. It makes a difference. □

MODERN REVOLUTIONS

JOHN DUNN

John Dunn deals in turn with eight major revolutions of the 20th century—Russia, China, Mexico, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba—and examines how these events came about. His analysis of a vast amount of historical information brings order out of chaos and takes the reader outside the conventional political spectrum.

There is a general introduction to revolutionary concepts, and the conclusion discusses approaches to the ideological assessment and causal explanation of modern revolutions. 40-page bibliography. Cloth \$14.50 Paper \$4.95



**Cambridge
University Press**

32 East 57th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

THE McGOVERN PHENOMENON

(continued from page 452)

now? One hopes the rumors are mistaken that suggest Meany and his friends will join a movement to "stop McGovern" at all costs—that can only signify an alliance with the most unpalatable elements in the Democratic party. Surely the "pragmatism" for which the union leadership has so often been praised ought to suggest that, like him or not, McGovern is a candidate with whom alliances can be cemented

and his movement a force with which coalitions can be organized. The alternative is likely to be a posture of sullenness, leading to a still further loss of prestige for the unions—and a victory for Nixon. McGovern may have reason to court the unions, but they now have at least as much reason to court him. It takes two to make possible a victory, only one to ensure defeat. □

LETTERS

The Irish as Immigrants

Editor:

Having recently read Andrew M. Greeley's "'A Most Distressful Nation'" [DISSENT, October 1971], and being a Massachusetts Irishman by birth and also being, among other things, a student and scholar of Irish literature and Irish history, I'd like to offer a few criticisms and suggested corrections to Greeley's piece, which I much enjoyed reading.

1. I have doubts about one of his central theses, namely that the Irish came to America with "immense advantages over any other ethnic immigrant: they spoke the language and they understood the political style." As for language, they did speak English but they spoke it with a brogue. Moreover, in Massachusetts anyway, the brogue hung on for some time, in fact, for generations. Even when the brogue was modified, certain habitual turns of speech and phrase hung on. In my childhood, in the 1920s, I could still hear the traces of the brogue and the characteristic phrases (many of them mordantly funny: "Is so and so dead?" "Well, if he isn't they played a dirty trick on him. They took the liberty of burying him this morning." An egotist was "full of himself"; a hypochondriac was "Mr. Well and Strong.") This in a group that came to this country, some of my ancestors among them, in the middle of the 19th century. I hardly need add how disabling such intonations and phraseology would be in an Anglo-dominated culture in which, when jobs were announced, the announcement was accompanied by a sign "NINA" — "No Irish need apply."

When Eugene O'Neill's father, James, decided to become a Shakespearean actor, the first thing he had to do was to rid himself of his brogue. He succeeded to a great extent but not totally, and reviewers sometimes joked about his Romeo or his Macbeth as having some of the flavor of the "ould sod." As for his characteristic speech patterns, they have been immortalized by his son in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. They too are unmistakable. He could never have had his professional career, had he not escaped from the brogue.

I am dubious about the whole language argument. The children of any non-English-speaking group would be brought up speaking English. Children born in this country might even grow up without much of an accent, Irish included, except when there were large concentrations of them, as in

Massachusetts. So that if one says that the Irish had an initial advantage by virtue of speaking English, such an advantage could not have lasted for very long. One of the purposes of compulsory, publicly supported education in the United States has been precisely to eradicate linguistic ethnic differences, although the attendance of Irish Catholic children in parochial schools may have perpetuated the "Irishisms."

I am dubious too about Mr. Greeley's proposition that the Irish understood the "political style" of America. In the first place, most of the immigrants were peasants, many from the west of Ireland. They no more had a concept of—much less understood—politics than they had of the man in the moon. Their "politics" was a patch of land, potatoes, the local Catholic priest as a friend and the English in general—landowner, magistrate, land agent, soldier, what have you—as the enemy. It is true that since 1800 Irish representatives were elected to places in the English Parliament and before that had had their own Parliament in Dublin. But the MP's who represented Ireland were about as far from the peasant-immigrants as Ireland was from America. Even the great Daniel O'Connell, who organized the mass weight of the great numbers of Irish peasants as had no Irish leader ever before, seemed quite remote to many of these folk. During his visit to Ireland de Tocqueville talked with Mgr. Nolan, Bishop of Carlow, who quoted a Whitefeet (these were secret gangs of Irish terrorists) as follows: "Emancipation [1829] has done nothing for us. Mr. O'Connell and the rich Catholics go to Parliament. We die of starvation just the same." (From *Journeys to England and Ireland* [1835]; trans. George Lawrence and K. P. Meyer [London, 1958], p. 132.)

Furthermore, insofar as any Irishman in the nineteenth century had any concept of politics, it was that of Westminster Hall, not Washington or Chicago or Boston or New York.

So that while it is true that the political situation, and the opportunities, in American cities in the 19th century may have been uniquely suited for the particular talents of the Irish, I doubt that they had any prior *experience* in the process itself. It is true that the experience of Ireland taught them the indelible necessity of always "taking care of your own." But any other immigrant group knew *this* elemental fact too.

2. I don't believe, as Greeley says, that the "conditions in which they [the Irish] had to live in the mid-19th century American metropolis were far worse than virtually any American has to endure today." Everything is relative, and unmeasurable, to be sure. But I would doubt that the Irish warren then was quite as bad as the black warren appears to be now. The sentimentalism about Old New York—"East Side, West Side," "Sweet Rosie O'Grady," etc.—is Irish; and the careers of people like Charles Murphy (the Tammany leader) Jimmie Walker, and Al Smith tell you why. Once the first or second generation took the initial pun-

ishment, there was no limit to what the sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons could do if they had the energy, brains, and ambition to climb. At one time the Irish, in effect, "owned" New York.

3. Professor Greeley thinks that Irish-descended creative talent has not been actualized as it might have been. This may be true, but an American of Irish descent (of the first generation too), namely Eugene O'Neill, has been the seminal figure in American drama, and in two respects. First, as everyone now agrees, he created, virtually single-handedly, serious American drama and launched it on the stage of the literate world. Second, he also wrote what is, to my mind anyway, the greatest single American drama, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. The English, for example, have always been hostile (more so than any other country in the world) to O'Neill's works. But the fact that at present Sir Lawrence Olivier is playing James Tyrone, which combination must constitute one of the dramatic high points of the 20th century, in the London production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is an indication of the weight and staying power of the play itself, now recognized as an authentic classic in the repertory of the drama of our civilization. It is also the classical and quintessential statement about the American Irish on their darker or tragic side.

4. Finally, the Irish as soldiers. Professor Greeley cited instances in American history when they were regarded simply as unreliable mercenaries. But in the larger sense, this was not generally the case. It was, for example, a long-standing joke in the British Isles (especially in Ireland and Scotland) that for several centuries the backbone of the British army were the Scottish and the Irish, and their bravery and loyalty were uncontested. O'Neill covered this aspect in *A Touch of the Poet* in his picture of Con Melody, who had fought under Wellington at Talavera in the Peninsular War. One of the reasons given for the Irish being in the army in such great numbers was that it suited their natural bellicosity. But the real reason was, as usual, economic: being in the army meant one could eat regularly and even have a career, neither of which was a certainty or even a probability on home grounds. Similarly, in America the army was often a simple economic "out." My own grandfather, on my mother's side, who at various times in his life was a ward heeler, a constable, and finally lived out the bulk of his later life as a night watchman at the Springfield Armory, had once done a tour of duty in the army in the Indian "wars," if they can be called that, in the West (never saw an Indian or fired a shot in anger, so the family legend had it).

An Irishman, a contemporary, once told me that his own father—in the 20th century—had two choices for a way of life: the Irish police or the British army. Even as late as World War I there were over 200,000 Irish in the British army. (This fact has been shrouded in what has been called The Great Oblivion, since after the Easter Rebel-

lion of 1916 no Irishman wanted to admit having been in the trenches with the British, nor would his children or grandchildren or probably his great-grandchildren wish to admit to the fact.)

However, Professor Greeley still has a point, and it ties in with some other things he remarked on: that self-control or self-discipline have not been the strong point of the Irish. In the Irish *Catechism* the Fifth Commandment is defined as follows:

Q. Say the fifth commandment.

A. Thou shalt not kill.

Q. What is forbidden by the fifth commandment?

A. All wilful murder, quarrelling, fighting, hatred, anger, revenge, and drunkenness.

[From the Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's *Catechism* (Cork, 1934), p. 55.]

The elaboration speaks for itself.

To quote de Tocqueville once more. He recorded his conversation with Mgr. Kinsley, Bishop of Killkenny:

[the Irish nation has] all the virtues dear to God; it has faith; there is no better Christian than the Irishman. Their morals are pure; premeditated crime is very rare. But they basically lack the civil virtues. They have no foresight or prudence. Their courage is instinctive; they throw themselves on an obstacle with extraordinary violence and, if they do not succeed at the first attempt, give it up. The Irishman is unstable and loves excitement and fighting. The Englishman, on the contrary, coldly calculates chances, approaches danger slowly, but does not withdraw until he succeeds. I know an English general who had long commanded an Irish brigade. He said to me: "I could train my soldiers to do anything, except be masters of themselves. [From de Tocqueville, *op. cit.*, p. 141.]

JOHN HENRY RALEIGH

ANDREW GREELEY replies:

1. Mr. Raleigh and I may both be wrong about the language situation. My colleague, Professor Emmet Larkin, tells me that the "famine Irish" immigrants came from counties where Irish was still the first language. Thus, the early immigrants may well have been Irish-speaking—though by 1870 this situation had unquestionably changed and most immigrants spoke English as their first language. The brogue may have been a handicap but I daresay not nearly as much of a handicap as an Italian or a Polish accent. My guess would be that it would take three generations rather than two to overcome the language problem. Even if one is taught English in school (and by no means all Poles or Germans were in the parochial schools), one still is at a disadvantage in the use of the language if it is not spoken in the home.

2. Professor Larkin has argued that it was precisely the skill at British rotten borough politics that made Daniel O'Connell an effective political leader. Similarly, the west of Ireland rank and file understood very well the need for personal loyalty and group cohesiveness—it was deeply rooted in their past traditions. They may not have

had civics-book understanding of American politics but they knew what it took to make a political machine work.

3. One wonders if Mr. Raleigh is aware of how many of today's urban poor lack inside toilets, central heating, and running water? And he really must be kidding if he thinks the Irish ever "owned" New York. The WASPs owned it and still do.

4. Eugene O'Neill does not a literary movement make. But my point was not about O'Neill or Powers or the O'Connors or Fitzgerald or O'Hara. My point is that the contemporary Irish seem to have lost the flair, unless you want to count characters like Pete Hamill who has recently boasted with considerable pride that the "New Irish" now think like Jews. I personally would prefer not to count Mr. Hamill.

5. I will make no comments on Irish fighting qualities since I was hardly endorsing the quotes that questioned their abilities as soldiers. I'm inclined to think that to have endured a millennium of British misrule and still not become Anglo-Saxon militarists is quite an accomplishment. □

On Russia's Prospects and Leninism

Editor:

I have just reread the article by Erazim V. Kohák, "Russia: The Fire Next Time?" in your October 1971 issue and wish to congratulate you and him. It is a splendid and profound piece of philosophical political economy.

Having lived in Czechoslovakia for many years before 1968, it is a great satisfaction to find such a correct interpretation of the developments there. The thinking is close to that of Eduard Goldstücker, and that is, to my mind, close to the highest compliment.

I do not intend nit-picking when I question a few formulations. On p. 479 Kohák states that "Leninism is a profoundly static world view." This is correct—but not Lenin's fault. He was acting dynamically: the mistake is to try to apply what he said now, half a century later, to quite different conditions. Lenin must have turned over in his grave at the way in which the 100th anniversary of his birth was celebrated.

More important, I do not believe that it necessarily follows that, if the Soviet Union dismantled its overcentralized controls, it would move to the status of a least developed country. Of course we do not know what would happen, but the Czechoslovak experience certainly lets us hope that it might, on the contrary, generate an immense new enthusiasm for socialism. The practical possibilities for really great increases in productivity lie unused in the Soviet economy. They will be released, as Kohák agrees, only with a democrati-

zation that touches and motivates all people. We did not anticipate how easy the transition from the dictatorship could be (although it took real guts on the part of Šik and a few others). Perhaps we also overrate the ability of the present Soviet regime to block progress—or is that just an admission that I am an incurable optimist?

GEORGE S. WHEELER

Corresponding Member of the
Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences

ERAZIM KOHÁK replies:

I did not mean to dispute the point that democratization could unlock vast productive potential in the "socialist" countries. Quite the contrary, the fact that Czechoslovakia manages to subsidize Soviet imperial interests with extensive arms shipments and loans to underdeveloped countries, that it subsidizes the Soviet Union through disadvantageous trade, that it supports totally disproportionate armed forces and a fantastically expensive secret police apparatus and still manages to survive testifies to that potential. My point was not that the Soviet Union (assuming it survived the centrifugal tension of its national minorities) would become "least developed" in an absolute sense—I presume it would develop more rapidly. Rather, I meant to point out that political modernization would acknowledge its shift from the position of the *most developed of the Third World countries* to the position of the *least developed of the Western ones*: the stage of development, which is impressive when measured by Third World standards, becomes rather less so if measured by Western ones.

I would, however, dispute reader Wheeler's first point. I do not think that Lenin would turn over in his grave. To be sure, in the '60s we invented a democratic Lenin as a counterweight to Stalin, for good reason. But, historically, it is a dubious interpretation. Lenin was not a democrat, and his dynamism is questionable. Kronstadt is the most obvious example: under the circumstances (which, to be sure, Lenin helped create), it would be difficult to blame Lenin for deciding to crush the uprising with armed might. But when Lenin decided not to acknowledge that decision as bitter necessity but to cover it with a lie, with an ideological cloak, he undercut any revolutionary dynamism. Reality can be dynamic—a lie ("mystified ideology," if you wish) is necessarily entirely static, because it has no foundation in reality and so cannot admit the criticism necessary for change. Lenin lied a lot: he lied about Kronstadt, he lied before about the Party Congress at Stockholm, he lied afterwards about the dictatorship "of the proletariat." I consider it essential to discover the truth in Marxism, the truth which is and has been present in it all along. I consider it vain, however, to look for an original innocence, a "pure" Marxism somewhere in history. □

LID PUBLICATIONS

WHY WE NEED SOCIALISM IN AMERICA

by Michael Harrington

\$1.00

"Every thinking person, whether or not he agrees with Harrington's point of view, will want to read it."

— Irving Howe

REDISCOVERING AMERICAN LABOR

by Penn Kemble

25¢

An excellent analysis of the "attitudes which have fed the indifferences and hostility toward labor within the intellectual community in the past twenty years."

Also by Michael Harrington

American Power in the Twentieth Century 50¢

The Social Industrial-Complex 35¢

More on Labor

Labor and the Liberal Tradition
by Lane Kirkland 50¢

Black Builders: A Job Program that Works
by Thomas R. Brooks\$1.00

Work and its Discontents
by Daniel Bell\$1.25

— Order from —

**League for Industrial Democracy
112 East 19th Street
New York, New York 10003**

Israel, the Arabs and the Middle East

edited by Irving Howe and Carl Gershman

This comprehensive volume, over 400 pages in length, is a collective effort to grapple seriously with the problems besetting the Middle East.

The editors write that their central premise is that, "The survival of Israel is a major priority for everyone who cares about democracy; it should be a special obligation for people on the democratic Left to speak out—passionately yet not uncritically—in behalf of the social innovations and achievements of Israeli society; such a view of the Middle East situation has nothing in common with any sort of chauvinism and in fact requires a commitment to policies leading toward Israeli-Arab amity...."

Here are some of the outstanding titles among the 22 essays:

- The Problems of Israeli Socialism—Ben Halpern
- Israel: The Two Kinds of Jews—Nissim Rejwan
- The Failure of the Fedayeen—Carl Gershman
- The Problems of Preventive Detention—Alan Dershowitz
- Modernization and Arab Society—Shlomo Avineri
- Zionism, the Marxist Critique, and the Left—Walter Laqueur
- Vietnam and Israel—Irving Howe
- Imperialism in the Middle East—Michael Harrington
- Repatriation or Restoration?—Marie Syrkin
- Self-Determination and the Palestinian Arabs — Julius Stone

\$12.50

AT ALL BOOKSTORES



QUADRANGLE BOOKS

A NEW YORK TIMES COMPANY

330 Madison Avenue, New York City 10017